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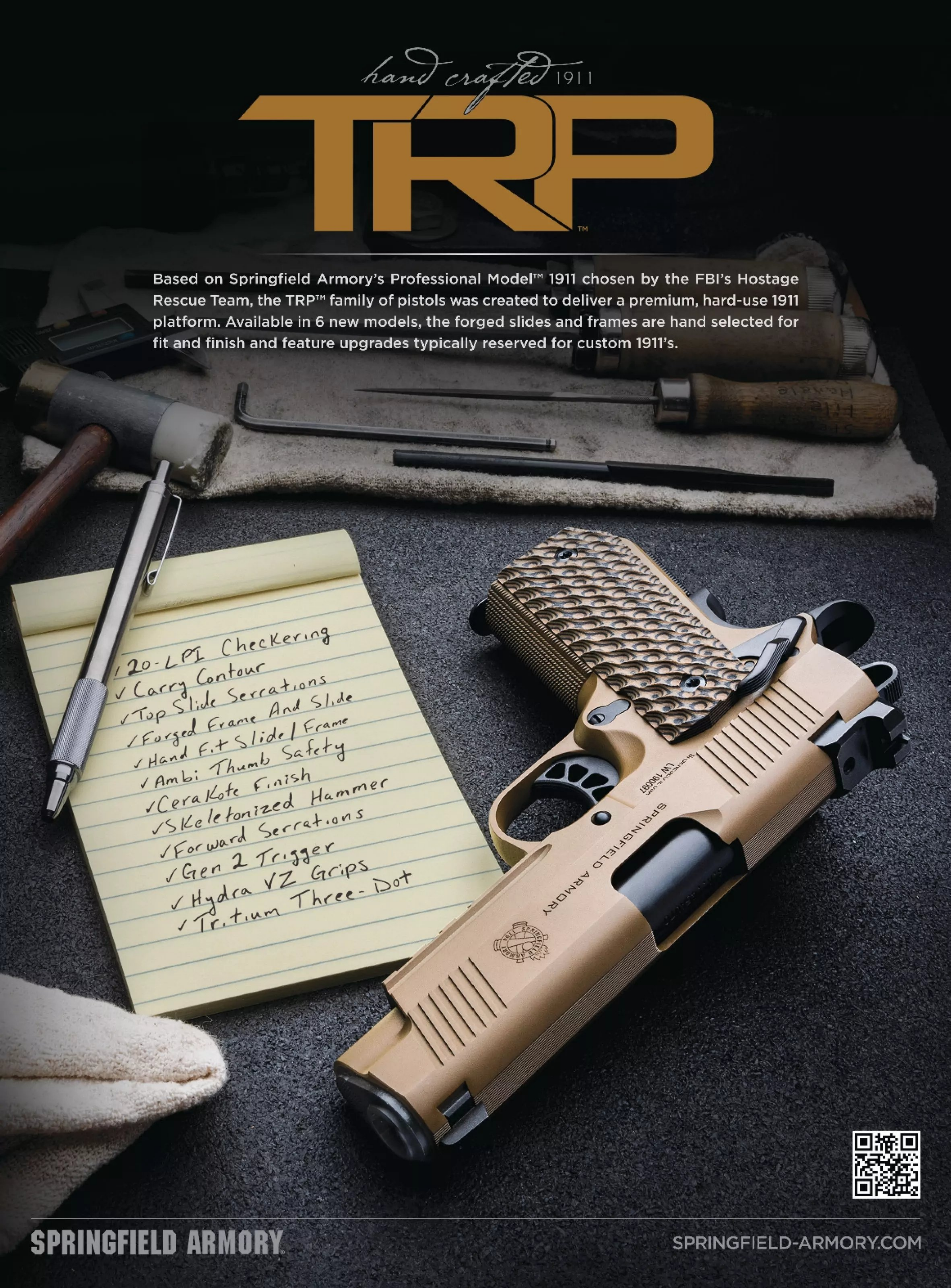


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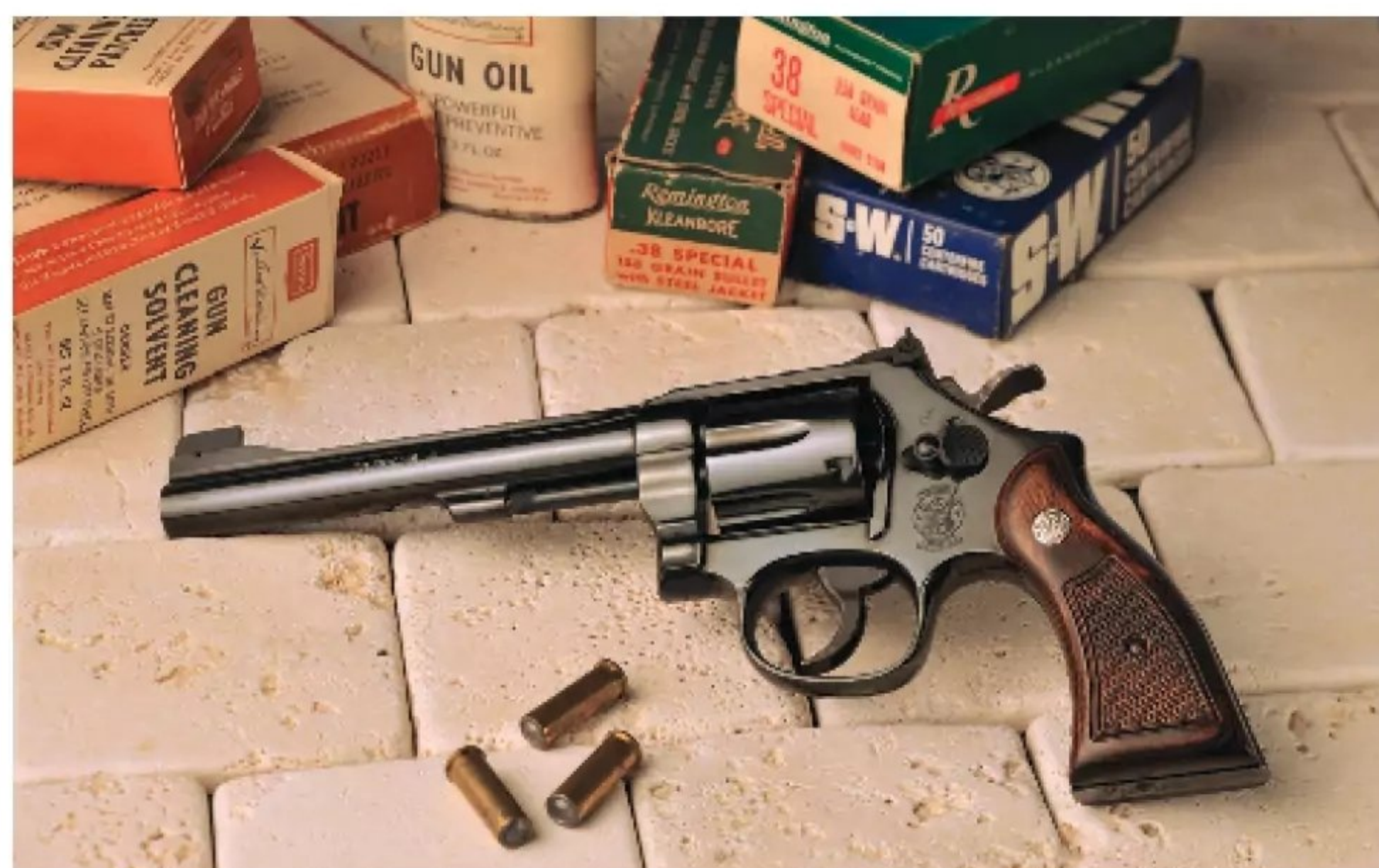


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The Great Model 14

I read with great interest the “Back Page Beauties” article by Stan Trzoniec in the February/March edition about the Smith & Wesson Model 14. The picture caught my attention, and I thought it looked like mine except for the barrel length. Mine is a Model 15-2—known as the Combat Masterpiece—and has the wide serrated hammer and wide, grooved trigger. I have had it several years, bought used. I don’t know if a previous owner had a trigger job done on it or not, but it has the smoothest single-action trigger of any of my handguns, and I have a few.

KEN DANIEL, ALABAMA

The Snake King

Thanks for the article on the Colt King Cobra .22 LR revolver. You’re my go-to for revolvers, both in the magazine and “Handguns” TV. While I have several semiauto handguns, I prefer double-action revolvers, especially in my old age.

I was in my local gun store a few weeks ago and spotted a Colt King Cobra .22 Target in the display case, but when I slowly cocked the hammer, the cylinder would not rotate all the way to where it would fully lock up. I told the salesman I’d take the gun, no rush, if they would send it back to Colt and have them adjust the timing. The manager told me this was a normal Colt idiosyncrasy, but since I have several other Colt revolvers that all lock up when the hammer is fully cocked, I wasn’t buying it. They actually had two of these, so the manager retrieved the second one from the stock room, and it worked normally. That one is now sitting beside me as I type this, and it’s a great little revolver to keep my King Cobra .357 company.

BERT BROWN, OREGON

More Large-Person Carry Advice

For whatever reason, I’m the guy everyone wants to huddle behind in a cold wind. As a rightie, I’ve found an outside-the-waistband on the left side using a

cross-draw to be the most efficient method for me. This became readily apparent in my truck after trying to draw with the seat belt latch in the buckle and a traditional right-hand holster. Just another view.

KEITH NORWOOD

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Upcoming ‘Handguns’ TV Episodes

The pages of the magazine come to life each week on Sportsman Channel. Hosts Rich Nance, Scott Rupp and Brad Fitzpatrick showcase new guns and cover topics from defensive techniques to plinking. It’s a half-hour of shooting you won’t want to miss. The show airs each Thursday at 10:30 p.m. Eastern, plus additional showings. Consult your local listings. Here’s what’s coming up.

Aug. 15—Classic Handguns	Sept. 12—Red Dot Revolution
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Remember, you can also catch past seasons of “Handguns”—as well as a ton of other shooting, hunting and fishing shows—via the My Outdoor TV app. Visit MyOutdoorTV.com to start your free trial.

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READY TO RELOAD?

THE BASIC GEAR FOR THOSE THINKING ABOUT TAKING UP THIS GREAT HOBBY.

By J. Scott Rupp

SHOOTERS TAKE UP HANDLOADING FOR A variety of reasons. Volume shooters do it to save a couple bucks. Weir-dos like me who gravitate toward cartridges like the .41 Magnum and .44 Special do it because it ensures we aren't completely dependent on the retail ammo market. And if we learned anything from the pandemic and the massive shortages caused by hoarding, maintaining a supply of handloading components can bring peace of mind for rounds like 9mm.

While handloading pistol and revolver cartridges requires no less care, in many ways it's easier than reloading bottleneck rifle cartridges. The nice thing about common handgun cartridges is you can use

dies that eliminate the need to lube the cases beforehand, typically through the use of carbide or titanium on the inner die surfaces.

The dies you need are: sizing/de-capping, which knocks out any spent primers and brings the case back to its proper dimensions; expander, which bells the case mouth for bullet insertion; and seating, taper crimp or seating/crimping dies, which I'll touch on later—although crimping is a topic that requires a lot more space than I have here.

Dies go into a press, and unless you're using a hand press—which is actually what I started on—the press needs to be bolted to a sturdy table or workbench.

What kind of press? For revolver loads I use a single-stage press because I don't need that many at a time. Thread the appropriate die into the press body and cycle all the cases through each step of the process. The single stage can do everything you need and costs only \$150 to \$300.

While I've not used one, the turret press has all the necessary dies installed in a rotating head (the turret). This allows you to perform multiple steps on a single cartridge. They're typically a couple hundred bucks more than a single stage.

If volume is what you're after, a progressive press is the way to go. Here the cartridges rotate through

each station, producing a loaded round with every pull of the handle. Progressives feature on-board priming and powder charging, and on most you can add time-saving devices like case feeders and bullet feeders. Progressive press prices run the gamut from \$500 to well over a grand.

Pros and cons? Like I said, for revolver loads the single-stage press does all I need and costs considerably less than a progressive. When it comes to 9mm, on the other hand, I do all my practice and competition loads on a progressive press. Once it's properly set up, I can knock out a hundred or so rounds before dinner and by the end of the week have enough to train for a week or two or to shoot a match.

Regardless of which press you opt for, there are a few things you need besides the necessary dies and components. It starts with references. Handloading can be dangerous. All the warnings you see in the reloading world aren't just CYA legalese. But if you stick to accepted practices and follow published reloading data religiously, reloading is a safe hobby.

Bullet and powder makers publish data in book form, online and through various apps. These are your gold standards. Shooting books and magazines do publish load data, but I always compare their recipes against the aforementioned sources. Data you see posted online on discussion forums and the like? Absolutely check those against published data.

While I don't find it necessary to weigh each charge like I do for most rifle rounds, where I'm striving for accuracy, you still need a scale to check whatever powder-handling device you end up with. I started with a balance beam scale, and

it's really all you need. However, I will say today's digital scales are a heck of a lot handier and faster, and there are models out there that don't cost much—from the mid \$30s to mid \$70s.

You'll want a caliper for measuring cartridge lengths. I've used metal, plastic and digital ones, and they all work fine. And surely you have a set of extra shooting glasses you can leave on your bench, right? Safety glasses are essential.

From here, the rest of what you needs depends on your setup. I'll take the single-stage option first, skipping past turrets since I don't have any experience with them.

Shellholders are cartridge-specific metal fittings into which you slide a cartridge base on your press or priming tool. Because they're inexpensive, I keep two on hand for each cartridge I reload a lot, allowing me to having one in my priming tool and one on the press and not have to move a single one around for each operation.

Handheld priming tools make quick work of inserting a new primer. In fact, many experienced handloaders prefer handhelds so they can feel the primer seating. Cost runs from \$25 to \$70 or so.

Going way back, I started handloading .45 ACP with a powder scoop that dispensed a fixed charge into a case. Lee still makes these, and its scoop kit comes with a guide listing how many grains of powder each one delivers—although you should confirm with a scale.

Simple manual powder dispensers are inexpensive. Once you confirm with a scale that it's throwing the proper charge, you only need to check it every 10 or so charges to make sure it's holding true.

The all-in-one electronic scale/dispenser units are great if you



◀ The single-stage press like this RCBS is a good entry point into reloading, and it works great for most tasks. ▲ But if volume is important to you, a progressive like this Hornady Lock-N-Load AP is the way to go.

choose to weigh each charge. Just enter the charge weight you want to throw, and the unit dispenses powder in the pan until it hits the chosen weight. You'll pay several hundred dollars for one, and they're slower than a manual dispenser.

You'll need a reloading funnel to transfer weighed charges into your cases. I also keep a flashlight handy to peer into charged cases for a visual check on powder levels. Cartridge loading trays make life easier by holding cases upright for various tasks. Both of these items can be had for just a few bucks.

If all this seems like a lot of stuff, you can simplify your entry into single-stage reloading by buying a kit that includes all the essentials. Hornady's Lock-N-Load kit sells for \$420, and the Rock Chucker →

← Supreme from RCBS is \$460. Companies like Lee and Lyman offer kits as well.

Let's talk progressives and also semiauto cartridges next, tying them together because it's most likely that if you're running a progressive, it's for a semiauto. Here, priming and powder charging are done on the press, and instead of a single-cartridge shellholder, cases are placed in a shellplate that rotates through the stations. You still need a scale to set and check the powder drop, as well as a caliper to measure cartridge length.

Semiauto cartridges get a taper crimp. I started with separate seater and crimp dies, but now I use a combo seater/crimp die. This saves a station on the press, which allows me to add a "powder cop" die as a safety check on case powder levels.

There's one other aspect to consider, and that's case cleaning. I don't worry about this with revolver cartridges because when I'm shooting these I usually dump empties right into a five-gallon bucket. But with a semiauto your brass is hitting the ground, and if you're shooting outside, that means a lot of dirt and grit ends up on and in your cases—dirt and grit you don't want working its way into your dies.

I use Hornady's original sonic cleaner, and it works fine, although I would opt for a larger-capacity model nowadays. A case dryer will save you lots of time, especially if, as I do, you clean twice—an initial cleaning before decapping and then an additional cleaning to get the primer pockets clean, which I find helps eliminate hangups on the progressive.

That's reloading in a nutshell. I find it a rewarding hobby in its own right, and it can be a practical one depending on how much—and what—you shoot. 

SWAMPFOX SENTINEL II



SWAMPFOX'S SENTINEL II IS A STRAIGHT-forward reflex sight built on the RMSc footprint, which is very common on today's small guns. Its three m.o.a. dot is available in red or green, and it has a generous 20mm window. It's built of 7075-T6 aluminum, with anti-glare serrations on the hood.

The Sentinel II has 10 brightness settings, which are controlled manually. Press the up arrow button on the left to increase intensity and the down arrow on the right to decrease it—which I prefer over having both buttons on the same side.

It features shake-awake, which puts the sight asleep after four minutes of motionlessness. This feature can't be deactivated, so you don't have to fret about what mode it's in. The dot automatically comes on at its last setting.

The Sentinel II comes with a unique rear sight guide that screws into the front of the sight body and acts as a backup rear sight should the CR2032 battery fail. This guide is available in plain black, or like the sample they sent me, one with two tritium dots.

The guide sits much higher in relation to the bore than standard irons do, and without a correspondingly higher front sight you're going



 **The Sentinel II features a unique rear sight guide that screws into the front of the sight to act as a backup. The tritium version is shown here.**

to have to account for that. With the Taurus GX4 I tested it on, point of impact was three inches high at three yards and six inches high at six yards.

The sight has to be removed to change the battery, which means you'll have to reconfirm zero. The dot is adjustable for windage and elevation, and the adjusters have tiny slots so you'll want to hang onto the supplied tool.

The Sentinel II comes with four nicely labeled sets of screws, and a handy tool for them. Last but not least, you get a waterproof plate that fits under the sight body.

Simple is good in my book. At \$269—\$299 if you opt for the tritium rear sight guide—the Sentinel II is a well-designed red dot that gives you solid basic features, plus that rear sight guide.—*J. Scott Rupp*

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RUGER SPEED SIX

I HAVE A SOLID AFFECTION FOR WORN,

workmanlike handguns. I don't regard a revolver introduced in my lifetime as vintage, but perhaps I need to adjust my world view. Some of these handguns that were introduced and then went out of production may rightly be called vintage. The Ruger Speed Six is such a revolver and one that will serve as well as any modern revolver.

Ruger introduced the Speed Six's primogenitor, the Security Six, in 1972. Advertised as a massive-frame revolver chambering the powerful .357 Magnum, it featured a solid frame for strength. The action was modular and could be removed from the bottom of the frame.

After a few months of Security Six production, Ruger introduced two fixed-sight models. The Service Six was simply a fixed-sight version of the Security Six while the Speed Six had a round butt in place of the Security Six's square one.

Ruger's advertised "massive frame" is actually a medium frame, similar in size to Colt's .41 frame revolvers. It was a tad heavier than the Smith & Wesson K frame and lighter than S&W N-frame guns. If you wanted to carry a .357 Magnum revolver concealed and maintain a measure of control with Magnum loads, the Speed Six with a 2.75- or four-inch was a good place to be.

The action is smooth and trouble free. The fixed sights are as good as any fixed revolver sights, and the round butt conceals well. The Ruger GP100 is no doubt stronger, but it is a bit heavy for constant carry. The Speed Six is just right.

Due to popular demand and



▲ The Speed Six was a medium-frame .357 Magnum revolver weighing around 32 ounces with the four-inch barrel.

regulations limiting officers to .38 Special, the Ruger Security Six, Service Six and Speed Six were also offered in .38 Special. A very few were chambered in 9mm Luger, and exports were available in .38/200.

While these are interesting and all good guns, the .357 Magnum version is the most versatile. The original Speed Six featured an attractive blue finish and slim-line wood grips. They are not finely grained walnut but serve well enough.

My sample has been refinished with some type of non-reflective coating. It isn't barbecue spray, but it isn't exactly Cerakote-level either. The round butt feels nice in the hand and allows cupping the grip quickly during speed draws.

A 32-ounce .357 Magnum has plenty of momentum, and it does sting with magnum loads. Adding a set of Hogue Monogrip grips aids immeasurably, although the origi-

nal grips aren't bad for a couple of cylinders at the range.

This is one revolver where Bill Jordan's rule of mastering the .357 Magnum applies. Fire 20 .38 Special cartridges for every magnum. With standard .38 Special loads the Ruger Speed Six is a joy to fire and use. Recoil is modest, and the smooth, rolling trigger action is easily mastered by those willing to practice.

All previous Ruger medium-frame double-action revolvers went out of production in 1988 with the introduction of the GP100. While the GP100 is among the most accurate and reliable handguns ever made, I wish Ruger had kept the lighter fixed-sight revolvers such as the Speed Six in production.

Today, Ruger Security Six .357 Magnum revolvers in good condition bring 90 percent of the price of a new GP100—often found for \$300 to \$500, depending on condition. 

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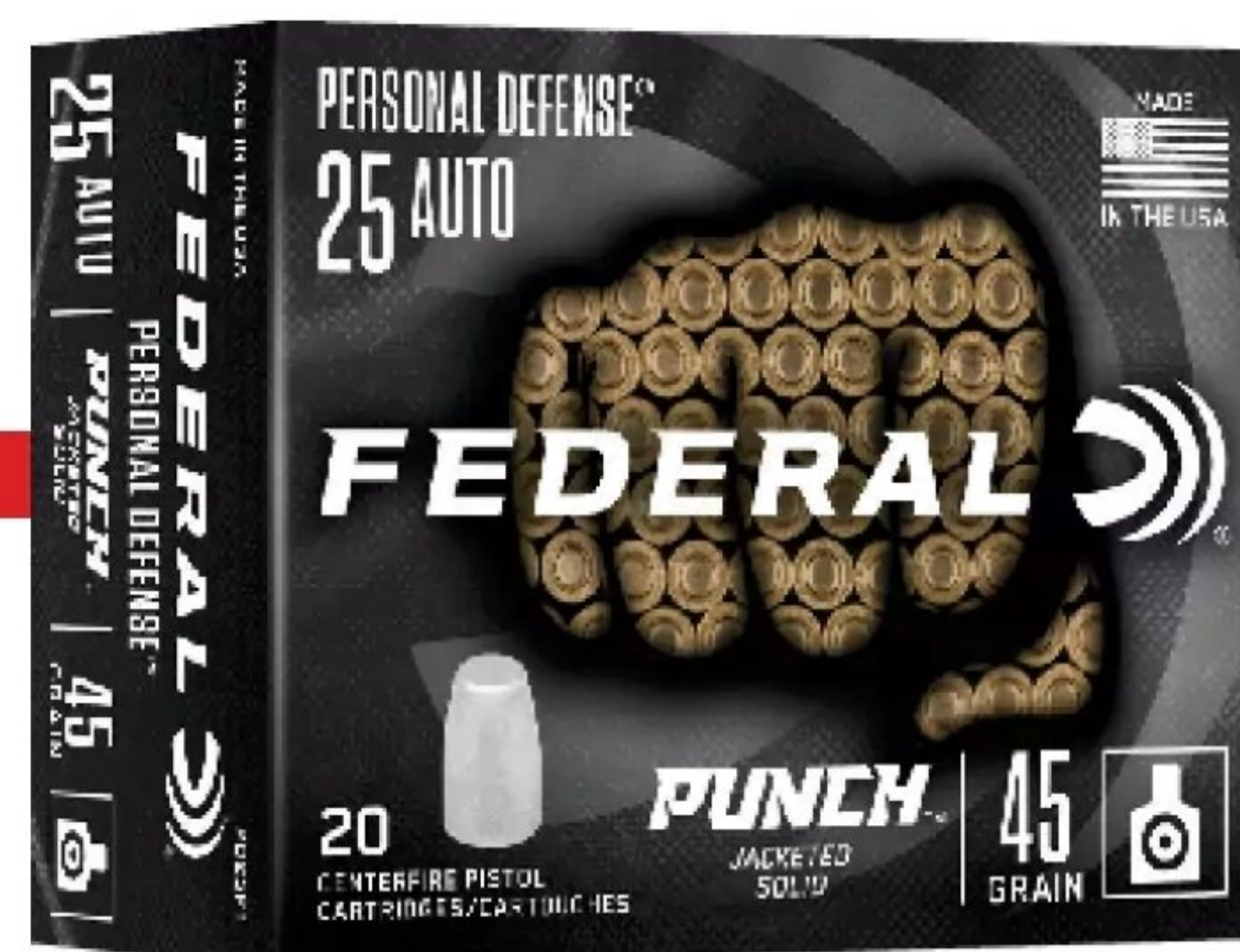
GUNS & GEAR | BY J. SCOTT RUPP



< TAURUS TX 22 T.O.R.O.

A great .22 semiauto gets even better with the upgraded TX 22 T.O.R.O. Because it's a Taurus Optics Ready Option gun, the slide is cut for optics on the RMSc footprint, and it has lightening cuts for faster cycling. This new version has enhanced iron sights that include a drift-adjustable, serrated black rear sight and a white-dot front. The frame now has a Picatinny rail, and the muzzle is threaded; a thread cap and suppressor adapter collar are included. The gun also has the Taurus Performance Trigger System, which delivers a short, smooth pull, and it comes with 16- and 22-round magazines.

{ \$364, TAURUSUSA.COM }



> FEDERAL PUNCH .25 AUTO

Fans of the .25 now have a new defensive option courtesy of Federal, and it's not a hollowpoint. The company's experts determined the best way to get the most out of the little cartridge is with a non-expanding solid—in this case a 45-grainer with a muzzle velocity of 825 fps—for deepest penetration. These rounds are loaded in quality brass and have sealed primers.

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{ \$105, STREAMLIGHT.COM }

< FIOCCHI 5.27X28 COMBO PACKS

Now you can get training and defensive ammo for your 5.7 in the same box. There are two 400-round combo packs, both of which include 300 rounds of 40-grain full-metal-jacket Range Dynamics training ammo (muzzle velocity 1,700 fps). The Combo PT pack adds 100 rounds of 40-grain Hyperformance tipped hollowpoints (1,750 fps) while the Combo Sub adds 100 rounds of Range Dynamics 62-grain subsonics (1,050 fps).

{ \$279, FIOCCHIUSA.COM }



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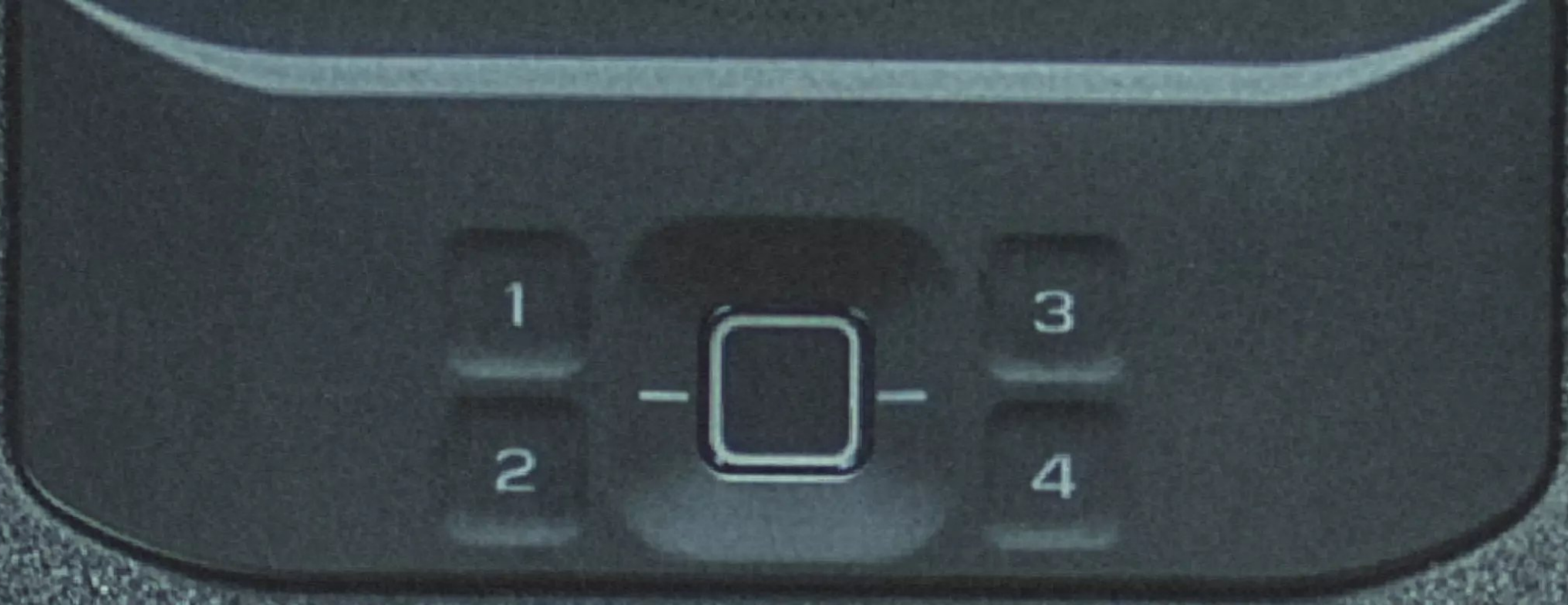
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SIG SAUER®

CIAO BELLA

SAY HELLO TO BIANCHI'S BEAUTIFUL NEW LINE OF LEATHER HOLSTERS.

THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT

the look and feel of leather holsters. Bianchi agrees, and that's why it has launched a new line of leather holsters for inside-the-waistband and outside-the-waistband carry. Known as the Old Tuscany line, it offers four options for shooters that will fit any carry style.

I'll begin with the Cortona (\$84), the sole IWB holster among the Old Tuscany line. It's crafted from premium full grain leather and comes with one-piece construction. There's a sturdy steel slip that will accommodate belts up to two inches, and the black metal slip features a U-shape retention point at the base.

When the holster is in place on the belt, it won't pull free when you draw, but you can apply light upward pressure to the base of the clip and slide the holster free. That's a nice feature because it prevents having to take off your belt to remove the holstered firearm.

The Cortona features an open-top design with ample backing to prevent the gun from digging into your flesh, which anyone who carries often will tell you is entirely unpleasant. Guns in the holster ride vertically with little or no forward cant.

Next in the Old Tuscany line is the Fucecchio. Designed for small-of-back carry, the OWB Fucecchio (\$94) is also made from premium full-grain leather but features a sharp 30-degree cant. It displays a tension-adjusting screw, which is beneficial for an open-top holster, and a hex wrench for adjusting it is included. The belt openings measure right at 1.75 inches, and the soft, flat backing



A The new Bianchi Old Tuscany leather holster models include (clockwise from top): Lajatico, Vicopisano, Fucecchio, and Cortona. The Cortona is an inside-the-waistband; the others are for outside-the-waistband carry.

is designed to fit close to the body.

The Lajatico (\$92) is one of two new Old Tuscany holsters that feature a thumb strap for added security. Like the other Old Tuscany holsters, it features good-looking full-grain leather construction and can be worn in a cross-draw position or strong side.

The backing is flat, similar to the Fucecchio, and the Lajatico rides close to the body and could be worn concealed with a cover garment. There are two forward belt cutouts that allow you to select from either a near-vertical or canted position, and the one-inch-wide strap has a sturdy metal snap to ensure easy access and security.

Last of the new Old Tuscany holsters is the Vicopisano (\$144) which, like the Lajatico, is an OWB belt slide holster with thumb strap

and dual belt cutouts that allow the wearer to adjust cant as needed. Like the Lajatico, it can also be worn in a cross-draw carry position. The Vicopisano features bold accent stitching along the front.

I'm an unabashed fan of leather holsters. My grandfather was a horseman and a part-time leather-worker, making bridles and customizing saddles for cutting and reining horses. I think the craftsmanship on these holsters is excellent. The choice of leather is very good, and the stitching is heavy enough to hold up for years of use. There's limited use of metal, but the belt clip on the Cortona and the metal screws and thumb strap snaps on the other holsters are made from robust metal components.

I could do without some of the exterior lines on these holsters →

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13+1 CAPACITY
Overall length - 6.1"



STR-9

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STR-9, 9MM
15+1 CAPACITY
Overall length - 7.44"
Distressed FDE Cerakote



STR-9, 9MM
15+1 CAPACITY
Overall length - 7.44"
Tungsten, Meprolight sights



STR-9 COMBAT X, 9MM
17+1 CAPACITY
Overall length - 7.44"

The growing family of Stoeger striker-fired, semi-auto pistols include micro-compact, mid-size and full-size models to fit any application. Optic-ready versions available. Standard features include:

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Enhanced ergonomics | Smooth-draw rounded edges
Interchangeable backstraps | Included cable lock

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← that are designed to mimic the geometry of the gun within because I think simple high-quality leather is all the aesthetics you need.

I carried all four holsters, although I admittedly didn't wear any of them for weeks on end. But they all spent at least a couple days on my belt as I puttered around the range and office and did farm chores. I spent the most time carrying the Cortona, which was sized for a Glock G19. There's a break-in period with new leather holsters, and I inserted and drew the G19 many times to make certain that the leather and gun were mating up well.

The Cortona is a simple holster design that rides comfortably against the body. It offers level 1 retention, and the fit was good enough that the holster secured the gun in position without impeding the draw.

The Cortona is a half-ounce heavier than my G19 Kydex IWB carry holster, and the Bianchi is slightly bulkier than a competing Kydex model simply due to the thickness of the leather.

The fit was not as tight as with Kydex, but the gun never felt loose in the holster. But there's no arguing, at least to my mind, that the Cortona has more soul than any Kydex holster could muster. The Bianchi works well for strong side carry with a suitable belt, but make certain the clip is secured under the belt. It will also work for appendix carry, although a G19 in a leather holster is pretty bulky for that application.

The holster I carried almost as much as the Cortona was the Fucecchio. I've never carried much on the small of the back, but if that's your favored carry position this one will work for you. The cutouts in the holster comfortably fit a 1.5-inch belt; a 1.75-incher will fit tightly. The tension screw effectively squeezes



J. Scott Rupp photo

▲ Revolver fans aren't left out. The Tuscany line offers both the Lajatico (shown) and Fucecchio for large- and small-frame S&W wheelguns.

the leather against the gun, locking it in position.

The gun rides with the grip facing sharply upward, which works well when wearing a sport coat so long as you don't have to sit down. The body-hugging design prevents the holster from tipping away from the body due to the weight of the gun, a hazard with some small-of-back designs. Here, the leather is strong enough you can carry a full-size pistol this way without it sagging, and access is good—provided you are flexible enough to reach the straight-up grip. The adjustable retention ensures security, which is especially important on a small-of-back level 1 holster.

The Vicopisano is similar to the Lajatico, although it is more striking with its bold exterior stitching and has the added thumb strap. The thumb-break design requires a downward press on the interior of the strap to unlock the gun. I much prefer this design to holsters with outside thumb breaks because I want the break to be as close to my body—and as far away from the bad guy—as possible.

The dual-cant design with two belt cutouts that allow for a proper carry angle is a nice touch. I also like that these holsters can be worn in a cross-draw fashion, which makes them much more versatile for driving, biking or any activity where you're seated. If I fall off my bike (which I rarely do) or roll my kayak (which I almost always do), I want to know that there's some form of retention holding my gun in place.

Both the Vicopisano and Lajatico allow the pistol to ride comfortably close to the body without biting, and both are cut for optics—although not all red dots may fit properly. Guns with red dots that don't extend beyond the front of the slide cut should fit, but you should double-check.

Like I said, I prefer a leather holster, and I like the Bianchis, although I admittedly struggled with the names. But the names are the only awkward parts about these holsters. They're available to fit a variety of guns, and you can expect the list to continue to grow, so if you've always wanted a really good leather holster at a really good value, the Old Tuscany line delivers. 



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(NOT) SEEING RED

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR REFLEX SIGHT FAILS OR IS DAMAGED.

A RED-DOT SIGHT AFFORDS THE DEFENSIVE

handgunner some distinct advantages. A dot simplifies aiming by eliminating the need to align front and rear sights, permitting a threat-first focus. But what if the dot isn't there when you so desperately need it?

This may be the result of a dead battery, a failure of the internal circuitry or serious damage to the sight. If you drive your gun out and realize there's no dot, you could transition to sights designed to co-witness with the red dot—if you have them.

If you don't have them, you can use the window of the red dot sight to aim. It won't be nearly as precise, but at typical pistol engagement distances of say 10 yards and closer, centering the target in the optical window should suffice. Remember, it's proper body alignment that aims your handgun. Your sights merely confirm that you're on target.

During an altercation, the window of the optic or the emitter may become caked with mud, blood or gunk, or may be severely cracked. Should this occur, you won't be able to see the front sight of your irons through the window of the optic. But even in this worst-case scenario, where neither sighting system is usable, all is not lost.

If the red dot's window is covered, you could try to wipe it, which may allow you to see through it well enough to engage. Of course, if the window is spiderwebbed, wiping it would be a moot point. In any case, wiping the optic window takes time you might not have.

A better bet is to use the housing of the red-dot sight to aim. This is a



Mike Emery photo

▲ Red dots are great for simplifying aiming, but if something happens to the sight, you need a new plan. ▼ Taping the lens is one way to learn how well you can shoot if the lens is damaged. The Trijicon RMR HD has an indexing aid that can help, but even without that you can learn to hit your target.

rudimentary technique, but it works. I wouldn't take a 25-yard shot using this method because of the low hit probability and the fact that you are morally and legally responsible for every round you fire. But at closer distances, this unconventional aiming procedure could come in handy.

When it comes to shooting without a dot, some optics are better than others. The Trijicon RMR's concave top makes it easier than a round-topped reflex sight to bracket the target. The new Trijicon RMR HD is even better thanks to its index ridge alignment aid. This ridge, which is centered along the top of the housing, can be used like a front sight.

Within about seven yards, you'll have to account for height over bore. Since the red-dot sight is above the bore, rounds fired at close range tend to impact lower than your point of aim. If you're using the top of the



housing as an aiming point, you can expect a greater disparity than using the dot centered within the window of the optic. To what degree this occurs will depend on distance to target and the shape of the red-dot housing. The effect shouldn't be dramatic, but it's worth knowing.

A good way to practice for the dot going out is to first shoot your handgun using the dot. Then turn the dot off. This forces you to either rely on backup sights or aim through the window of the optic. Start at five yards and work your way back to about 10 yards once you get the hang of it. Make a mental note of any divergence between where you're aiming and where the rounds impact the target.

Now, to simulate the window being obscured, place a piece of tape over the rear window of the red-dot sight. This will force you to use the housing, not the window, to aim.

Take your time, ensuring the muzzle of your handgun is parallel to the ground so your rounds will impact the target and be contained by the downrange berm. Again, start close and work your way back. Fire one round at a time, paying close attention to where each round hits the target, then adjust accordingly.

When you are confident that you can get predictable, combat-effective hits, you can fire two rounds at a time, then three and so on. Be sure to get the same sight picture using the housing or, in the case of the Trijicon RMR HD, the indexing ridge, before firing each shot.

Having a red-dot sight fail is not an excuse to sling lead in the general direction of a bad guy. You still need to make each shot count—not only to stop the threat but also to ensure you aren't endangering bystanders.

With practice, I found I could keep even rapid-fire strings contained within the chest box of the target out to 10 yards. As distance increases, shot groups will expand, but that's true even when using the dot or backup irons. The only way you will learn the limitations of using the red-dot sight housing to aim is by experimenting at the range. 

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For example, MOTV offers nine seasons—102 episodes—of “Handguns” (formerly “Handguns & Defensive Weapons”) alone. The show focuses primarily on personal protection and includes plenty of recreational shooting activities such as plinking and action-shooting competitions.

It features reviews of the latest firearms, ammunition and shooting accessories, as well as advice on marksmanship, gun handling, self-defense techniques and a host of

other handgun-related topics.

But wait, there's more! There are 10-plus seasons of the popular “Guns & Ammo” television shows, encompassing more than 200 episodes available on the app. You can also check out past episodes of shows like “Gun Stories,” “The Gunfather,” “Hollywood Weapons” and “Shootout Lane.”

In addition to the HD episodes, there are short-form videos encompassing how-to instructional and gun history topics you can watch anytime, anywhere.

I think *Handguns* readers will really appreciate MOTV's short-form HD videos covering a wide variety of self-defense topics. These videos are perfect for sharing with family mem-

bers to reinforce the finer points of keeping yourself safe. Like the show episodes, the videos are true HD quality for the ultimate viewing experience.

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In addition to streaming video, you can take this content with you, downloading content for later viewing when you're without internet access.

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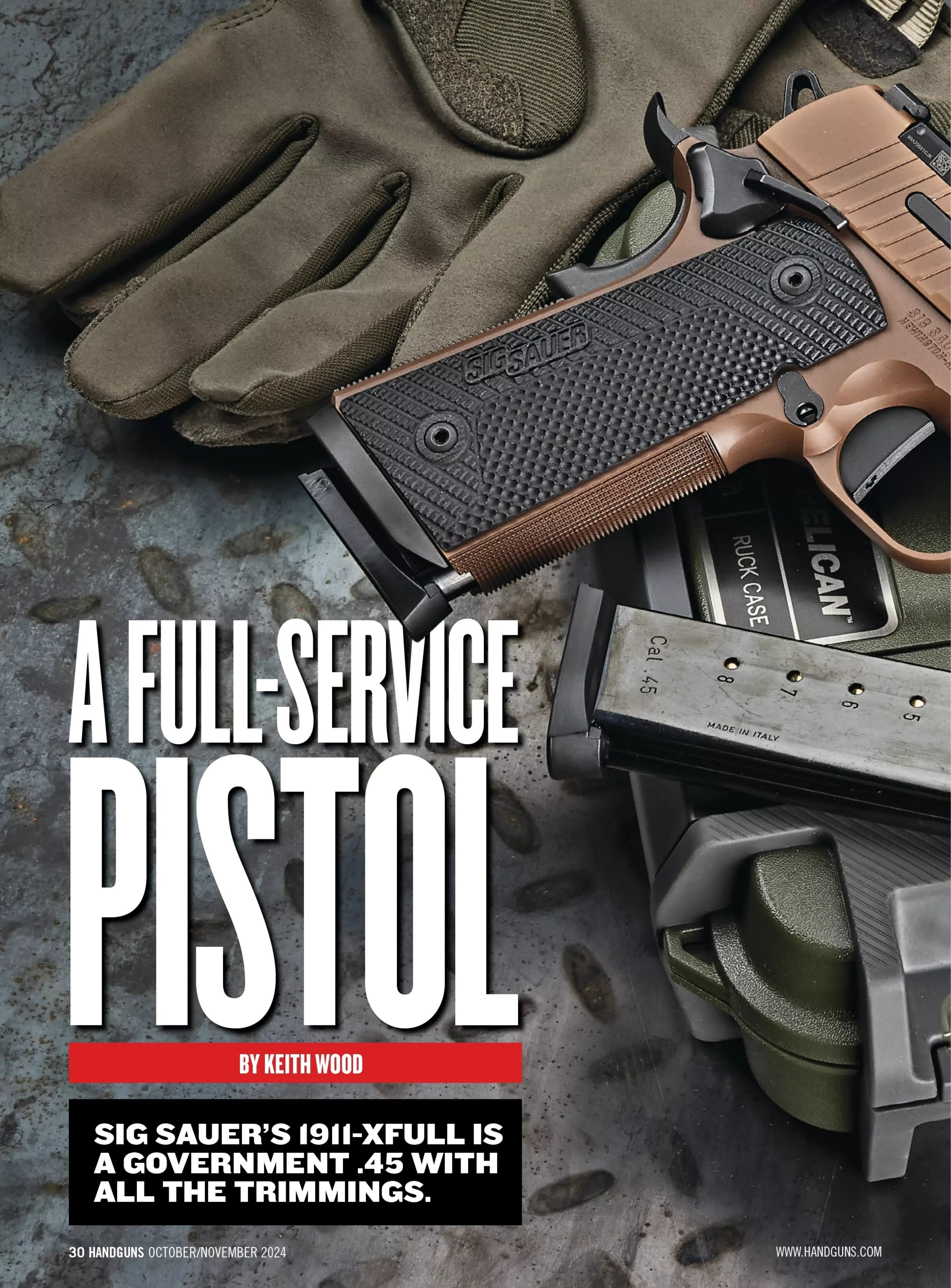


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A FULL-SERVICE PISTOL

BY KEITH WOOD

**SIG SAUER'S 1911-XFULL IS
A GOVERNMENT .45 WITH
ALL THE TRIMMINGS.**



SIG Sauer is a company on the cutting edge of fire-arm design, engineering 21st century solutions for military, law enforcement and civilian use. The company's Next Generation Squad Weapon is proving to be as much a game-changer for the military as the P365 and P320 have been for the general public. Given this emphasis on the future, some might wonder why the company is continuing to innovate on a 113-year-old handgun design.

Maybe some things are just too good to die. The 1911-XFull is the company's latest product in the single-stack .45 lineup, combining the classic features that made the 1911 great with some modern twists.

The 1911 can be a tricky handgun to build. John Browning's design didn't always lend itself well to mass production outside of the institutional knowledge that lived in Colt's plant in Hartford. If you stack too many tolerances on that design, you are going to run into problems.

Technology has changed much of that, though. With today's modern machining tools and techniques, parts can be made precisely and repeatedly to a specified print. I've spent some time on SIG Sauer's production floor, and it is impressive. The company's machining operations in its New Hampshire facilities are extremely sophisticated, ideal for creating 1911 parts that will fit and function precisely and reliably.

As the name suggests, the 1911-XFull is a full-size 1911, aka a Government model, chambered in .45 ACP. The main components, the slide and frame, are machined from stainless steel. This makes for a heavy handgun, two pounds, 10 ounces unloaded. This mass goes a long way in making the .45 ACP pleasant to shoot. Given its size, though, the 1911-XFull probably isn't going to be anyone's first choice for concealed carry.

The slide on the 1911-XFull screams "SIG." Its contour is



Michael Anschuetz photo

A FULL-SERVICE PISTOL

← clearly inspired by the P320 series of handguns, with the same tri-top cut that sweeps upward as it moves from the muzzle toward the rear sight. The cocking serrations, both front and rear, also match the look of the company's flagship striker-fired pistol. Aesthetically, this treatment sets the 1911-XFull apart from the wide variety of 1911-style handguns out there.

The top of the slide is a smooth

dome with no flat top or serrations. The slide is cut for an optic mount behind the ejection port, and a cover plate is included with the handgun. More on the optic later.

The ejection port is generously cut to allow for spent cases (and loaded rounds) to eject, and it is scalloped at the rear to prevent damaging brass. The saddle area of the slide is cut with a ball end mill and angled to meet the frame's dust

cover precisely. The bottom of the slide is slightly beveled.

Unlike the traditional Colt design, SIG Sauer 1911s use an external extractor. Instead of relying on its own tension, the extractor pivots on a pin and is actuated by coil spring pressure, just like the extractors used on nearly all modern pistols.

External extractors are a highly debatable topic among 1911 enthusiasts, but SIG Sauer seems to have it figured out, as my test sample extracted reliably. The 1911-XFull's slide still has the tunnel cut from the rear for an internal extractor, but a false extractor plug rides in that orifice. The ejector is a standard 1911-style that is pinned into the frame.

The 1911-XFull uses a standard five-inch GI-style barrel that is DLC coated black. The barrel is of full diameter at the muzzle but tapers down by 0.008 inch behind where it interfaces with the bushing, allowing for movement when not locked into battery. This has no effect on accuracy, but aids reliability as it gives the components room to cycle.

The muzzle fits flush with the bushing, and no wrench is required for removal. The 1911-XFull uses a standard one-piece recoil spring guide with a smooth-faced plug and a flat-wire recoil spring. →



A The black controls and G10 grip panels contrast nicely with the coyote PVD color option. The slide is cut on the RMSc footprint, and buyers can opt to have SIG's Romeo-X Compact sight installed.



A The 1911-XFull uses an external extractor that functioned with 100 percent reliability during testing.

SIG SAUER 1911-XFULL

TYPE: 1911

CALIBER: .45 ACP

CAPACITY: 8+1

BARREL: 5 in., DLC coated

WEIGHT: 2 lb., 10 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: coyote PVD-finished stainless steel (as tested)

GRIPS: G10 panels

TRIGGER: Series 80; 5 lb., 8 oz. pull (measured)

SIGHTS: X-Ray 3 day/night sights; slide cut for optics on RMSc footprint; Romeo-X Compact installed (as tested)

SAFETIES: ambidextrous thumb, grip w/ memory bump

PRICE: \$1,799 (as tested)

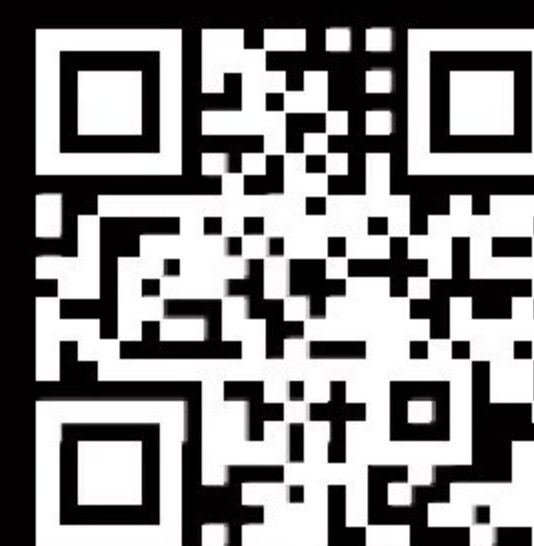
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← The 1911-XFull’s frame is very modern by 1911 standards. For starters, it has a full rail machined integrally into the dust cover for mounting a light or laser. The trigger guard is rounded, and the frame is cut high to allow for a leveraged grip on the gun. The frontstrap is machine checkered at 25 lines per inch, which is my preferred pattern for its good balance of friction and abrasion potential.

The mainspring housing has matching 25-lpi checkering and is threaded at the bottom to accept a hex screw that secures the extended magazine well. The lips of the extended well hang over the bevels on the frame’s well to ensure magazines will not snag when inserted.

The beavertail grip safety sweeps upward to allow for a high grip and has a generous memory bump to ensure that the safety disengages properly regardless of hand position. On my test sample, the grip safety disengaged just before it reached its fully depressed position.

The manual safety on the 1911-XFull is ambidextrous and slightly extended, allowing for a high-thumb shooting grip. The slide stop is extended as well, hooking slightly over the plunger tube.

The slide stop fits flush with the right side of the frame, which means a pen or other small object is required for disassembly. There is a dimple cut into the pin to help facilitate this. A nice touch is a bevel where the slide stop meets the plunger, allowing the slide stop to be easily inserted without risking a scratch on the frame.

The 1911-XFull is fitted with black G10 grips that are cut in a mixture of patterns. There is a cutout allowing easier access to the magazine catch, and that section is smooth.

The grips are secured with Torx-head fasteners. The combination of checkered steel and textured G10 provides plenty of gripping surface, and the high-cut frame allows the gun to ride low in the hand.

ACCURACY RESULTS | SIG SAUER 1911-XFULL

.45 ACP	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Hornady American Gunner XTP	185	919	14	1.3
Asym FMJ	230	753	17	1.7
American Eagle FMJ	230	790	7	1.9

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups fired at 25 yards from a Target Shooting Inc. Model 1500 rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots using a Garmin Xero C1 placed adjacent to the muzzle. Abbreviation: FMJ, full metal jacket

Unlike most manufacturers of 1911-style handguns, SIG Sauer uses a Series 80-style firing pin safety on its pistols. This system combines a lever in the frame with a plunger in the slide to ensure that the firing pin cannot move unless the trigger is pulled.

The advantage, of course, is a margin of safety, but this comes at the expense of the trigger pull. Whether this compromise is worthwhile is up to the individual. The trigger pull on my test sample was decent, breaking at 5.5 pounds after a bump that I’ll blame on the firing-pin safety mechanism.

The trigger shoe is flat, which fits the modern theme and also allows more flexibility in terms of where the finger can be placed on the trigger. The face of the trigger is serrated.

The internal ignition parts—sear, disconnecter and hammer—are produced using the metal injection molding or MIM process. Rounding out the controls is the magazine release, which is slightly extended and knurled.

As mentioned, the 1911-XFull is an optic-ready pistol that is available with a factory-installed Romeo-X Compact red-dot sight as an option. That’s what SIG sent me to test.

The Romeo-X Compact is an aluminum-housed open-emitter red-dot sight with a two m.o.a. dot. There are 15 illumination settings including three for use with night vision. If you’ve never used a red-dot-equipped handgun in conjunction with night vision goggles, you are missing out.

Battery life is 20,000 hours—that’s more than two years—and the battery is side-loaded, which allows for



▲ An extended magazine well is attached to the frame using a hex screw and can be removed at the shooter’s discretion.

replacement without losing zero. I see the value of red-dot sights on handguns, but I only use them for certain applications. However, this is a quality sight that certainly made my job easier when it came to evaluating the 1911-XFull’s accuracy potential.

SIG Sauer didn’t skimp on the iron sights, either. The X-Ray 3 day/night sights are dovetailed into the slide. The front combines a tritium lamp with a daylight-visible green circle. The rear sight has a serrated face with two tritium dots.

The 1911-XFull is available with two finish options. One is all-black with a Nitron-treated slide and frame and black DLC on many of the smaller parts. The version I chose combines a coyote tan PVD finish on the slide and frame with black DLC accents.

The 1911-XFull is compatible with standard 1911 magazines and →

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With any semiautomatic handgun, function is the primary concern. As much as I love 1911s, factory guns can be finicky, so I focus on evaluating reliability when testing one.

The first function test was during the accuracy evaluation, when I fired three different factory loads through the handgun. Not only did the handgun feed, fire, extract and eject as it should, accuracy was very good. As I mentioned, the Romeo-X Compact was a huge advantage when it came to getting good groups from the bench.

Next, I did some reliability-specific tests that I borrowed from Hilton Yam of 10-8 Performance. The first was to load a single round in a magazine and fire the handgun to ensure that the slide locked back properly. I repeated this exercise 10 times, and it passed easily.



▲ The ball end mill cuts angle back to match the frame's dust cover, and the accessory rail permits the addition of lights and lasers.

The next test was designed to put maximum stress on the extractor. Since the top edge of a 1911's magazine can aid extraction by supporting the case on its way out of the gun, I chambered a round and then removed the magazine from the

handgun before firing. This way, the extractor and ejector had to do all the work.

I repeated this test 10 times and, once again, the 1911-XFull passed with flying colors. Any reservations I had about an external extrac- →

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← tor on this gun were laid to rest. Finally, I ran the rest of the box of 230-grain American Eagle Syntech through the gun as fast as I could. Once again, there were zero malfunctions.

Overall, I was very impressed with the SIG Sauer 1911-XFull. This handgun combines much of what makes the 1911 series so great with some stylistic tweaks that make it befitting of the SIG Sauer name.

Whether you are a devoted SIG fan looking to test the 1911 waters or vice versa, this handgun helps bridge the gap very well. Its accuracy and reliability were excellent, and the fit and finish were what you would expect from one of the top firearm manufacturers operating today.

The SIG Sauer 1911-XFull is a perfectly capable self-defense handgun, could certainly be used in practical pistol competitions and would also make a fun range gun.



▲ Wood found the all-steel .45 to be very controllable, particularly with the nicely checkered frontstrap and mainspring housing, and the G10 grip panels.

As a lifelong enthusiast of the 1911, I am delighted to see manufacturers continue to turn out quality examples that will entice another generation of shooters into appreciating one of history’s great handguns.

There are lighter handguns on the

market today, as well as models that hold far more ammo and that boast impressive ergonomics. But the 1911 remains relevant due to its inherent shootability—something even 21st century handguns struggle to improve upon.

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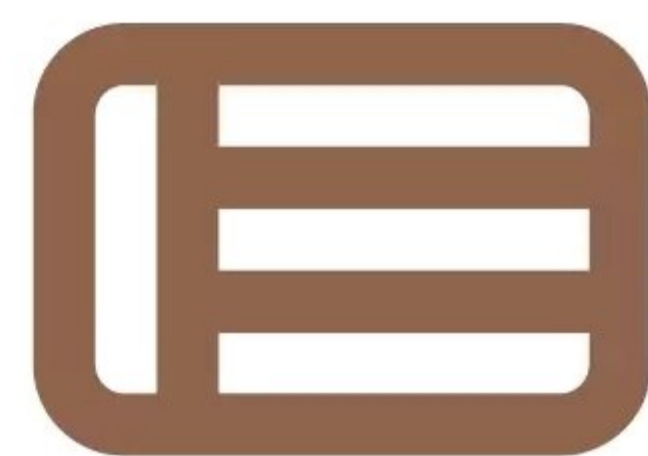


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FORGED EXCELLENCE

BY J. SCOTT RUPP



HAMMERLI'S FORGE H1 IS A 1911-STYLE .22 THAT'S DEPENDABLE, ACCURATE AND SO MUCH FUN TO SHOOT.



Depending on your shooting background and your age, the Hammerli brand conjures up visions of the heyday of Olympic-style free pistol competition, athletes stock still at the firing line, a single arm extended toward the target. In the shooter's hand was a futuristic-looking .22 with a wooden grip that encircled the firing hand. Chances are it was a Hammerli 100 or, later, a 150—for years top choices among elite shooters.

Hammerli, which traces its roots to a Swiss barrel-making company established in 1863, is still alive and well in international pistol competition, but now that it is in the hands of the PW Group—a company that owns such firms as Walther and Umarex USA—the Hammerli brand is spreading its wings.

Today, Hammerli Arms is producing two .22 rifles, the TAC R1 and Force B1, along with the Forge H1 1911-style .22 that's the subject of this review. I wondered right off what prompted a historic competition gunmaker to jump into selling what, for lack of a better term, is a “regular” gun.

“There are two different sides of Hammerli, first being the competition side,” said Cody Osborn, the company's director of communications. “Hammerli Arms is a new side that is meant to bring new, innovative products to the American consumer market for hunting, defense and plinking. This is a new venture that has just started in recent years, even though the Hammerli brand is older than Walther.”

The Forge H1 is available with either a five- or 4.25-inch barrel; my sample is the former. Weight with an empty mag is right at 32 ounces, and overall length is 9.6 inches.

Hammerli is marketing this primarily as a “survival” gun, and as such it features a black Cera-kote finish to fight corrosion under harsh conditions. The alumi- ➔

FORGED EXCELLENCE

← num slide has a ball end cut, and it sports cocking serrations on the front and rear. They're angled and square-bottomed, and they're nice and sharp.

In addition, immediately behind the front cuts you'll find a series of fine, vertical serrations. So even though the slide is already easy to operate, thanks to its light weight and a light recoil spring, there's plenty of purchase and almost no chance your hands are going to slip if wet or while wearing gloves.

"Hammerli Forge H1 22" is engraved on the left side of the slide, with the Hammerli logo on the right. Sights are white three-dot, and both are dovetailed into the slide. Both the front and rear sights are adjustable for windage by loosening their set screws, and Hammerli provides the proper Allen wrenches; the front and rear take different sizes.

On my sample, the bases of the sights don't sit flush against the bottoms of their dovetails; you can

see just a sliver of light underneath. On a centerfire pistol I might worry about this, but I don't think it's a concern with a .22.

The front blade is 0.12 inch wide, and the notch on the low-profile rear sight is 0.165. This results in a fairly roomy sight picture that may not be conducive to Olympic-medal accuracy, but it's fast to acquire and easy to shoot. If these sights don't do it for you, Osborn said that while the dovetail cuts are proprietary, Dawson Precision makes Colt 1911 .22 sights that fit the Hammerli.

The black Cerakoted frame is steel and, in keeping with the survival theme, it sports a four-slot accessory rail for mounting a light or light/laser. The right side is engraved "Hammerli Arms Ft. Smith, AR" and "Made in Germany by Umarex."

The barrel is threaded, and Hammerli furnishes a wrench that fits the thread-cap flats. However, the company doesn't supply the adapter necessary to add a suppressor or compensator. Osborn said the thread pattern is 1/2x28, and if you find an adapter that fits the Walther P22 or Colt 1911 .22, it will fit the Forge H1.

The frame extends slightly below the magazine well opening, and the frontstrap and flat mainspring housing are smooth. It accepts →



▲ The gun features controls that will be familiar to any 1911 shooter, and they are compatible with standard 1911 parts, with some fitting. Aftermarket grips will go right on, though.



▲ The slide has excellent serrations on the front and rear, and the front is treated to an extra, finer set of serrations. The slide is Cerakoted to resist corrosion.

HAMMERLI ARMS FORGE H1

TYPE: single-action rimfire semiauto

CALIBER: .22 Long Rifle

CAPACITY: 12+1

BARREL: 5 in., threaded 1/2x28

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 9.4/5.25/1.2 in.

WEIGHT: 32 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: Cerakoted steel slide and aluminum frame

TRIGGER: 2 lb., 12 oz. (measured)

SIGHTS: low profile 3-dot

SAFETIES: single-side thumb, memory-bump grip

PRICE: \$399

MANUFACTURER: Umarex for Hammerli Arms, HAMMERLIARMS.COM



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FORGED EXCELLENCE

← standard 1911 stocks, and the gun comes with black rubber grip panels that are slightly pebbled and feature the Hammerli logo on both sides. The left side is slightly dished out behind the magazine release for better access to the release.

That release—along with the extended single-side thumb safety, grip safety with memory bump, slide stop and three-hole trigger—are typical 1911. The trigger face is smooth, and the pull on this sample was two pounds, 12 ounces on average, with just a bit of creep. And yes, it’s a rimfire so you shouldn’t dry-fire the gun with an empty chamber. I used a snap cap to measure the trigger, and you’d be wise to do the same if you want to get in any dry-fire training.

In case you get the urge to tinker, Osborn said most of the fire-control parts are standard 1911 fare, and they will interchange with aftermarket parts with some fitting. Frankly, I was happy with the gun as it is.

While it’s modeled on the 1911, the Forge H1 is blowback operated, and its disassembly/reassembly process is a little different. I know everyone has their preferences, but my 1911 process begins with pulling the entire upper from the frame and then disassembling the recoil spring, guide rod and bushing. With the Hammerli you’ll want to remove the bushing and recoil spring and its plug first. Push in on the plug, swing the bushing clockwise to remove the spring assembly, then rotate clockwise to remove the bushing.

Unlike a standard 1911, there’s no half-moon cut in the slide to align the slide stop. Move the slide to the rear until the lever matches up with the slide-stop notch. The lever won’t just push out; you’ll need a non-marring tool of some kind to drive out the lever from the right side. Then retract the slide, lift it off the frame at the rear and remove it forward.

Reassemble in reverse order. To reinstall the slide lock lever, you’ll

need to pull the guide rod slightly forward to permit the lever’s peg to fit through the frame. Leave the slide retracted and work the recoil spring over the guide rod, keeping it under control as you allow the slide to go forward, and then reinstall the barrel bushing.

The gun ships with two 12-round metal magazines with plastic bumpers. They, like the gun, are made in Germany, and they have loading assists on one side. The assists don’t project very much and don’t offer a ton of purchase, and they’re fine until you get close to full capacity. While I didn’t have much trouble getting those last rounds in, Hammerli also supplies a plastic loader that slides over the body of the mag for fast, easy spring compression.

Bench testing showed the gun to be quite accurate, and results are shown in the accompanying chart. At 25 yards, the faster ammo was one to two inches low while the standard-velocity ammo was two to three inches low. However, at the 10-yard line where I shot the gun

offhand in drills, everything was dead on.

In addition to my range testing, we also shot the Hammerli quite a bit on “Handguns” TV, and the gun ran without a hitch with a variety of ammunition. Initially we encountered an issue where the thumb safety would occasionally stick in the Safe position, hanging up on the plunger, but with continued use the problem disappeared.

Other than that, the only “mal-function” was a couple times the slide went forward on its own when slapping in a fresh mag. I can live with that.

It’s worth noting that during filming co-host Rich Nance had a couple of instances where the gun failed to cycle, but it turned out he was stalling the slide with his support-hand thumb. I’m telling you this not to bust on Rich (well, maybe a little) or the gun but to remind shooters that this isn’t a 9mm or a .45. It doesn’t take much shooter interference to cause problems on a gun with such a light recoil spring and slide. →



▲ The barrel is threaded, and while Hammerli Arms provides a wrench that fits the flats, you’ll have to hunt up a 1/2x28 adapter to install a suppressor or compensator.

ACCURACY RESULTS HAMMERLI ARMS FORGE H1				
.22 Long Rifle	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Federal Punch	29	1,322	17	1.6
CCI Stinger HP	32	1,266	31	2.1
Magtech LRN	40	827	20	2.2
Fiocchi Range Dynamics LRN	40	926	17	2.3

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 15/25 yards from a Ransom Multi Cal Steady Rest. Velocities are averages of 15 shots recorded 10 feet from the muzzle with a ProChrono DLX. Abbreviations: HP, hollowpoint; LRN, lead roundnose



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FORGED EXCELLENCE

← The more I shot the Forge H1, the more I liked it. While I think some of the Hammerli’s survivalist marketing hype is over the top, I do agree that a .22 is an essential “head for the hills” firearm. This one is accurate enough to bag small game for the pot, and it’s also one of the most well-balanced .22s you’ll ever shoot.

I ran a number of Failure Drills—two shots to the chest and one to the head—on USPSA targets at 10 yards with Federal Punch, and I was really impressed by how well the gun handled and how accurate you can be at speed with it.

The generous sight picture was just perfect for this type of shooting, and the trigger is fantastic—great pull, great reset. When I run the Failure Drill I typically throw a couple outside the A-zone head box. Not with the Hammerli. All my shots were dead on.

All that survivalist/defensive stuff



A The low-profile three-dot sights provide a roomy sight picture that’s fast to acquire and easy to hit with. Both front and rear are drift-adjustable for windage, and hex wrenches are provided for both.

aside, it is such a blast to shoot. I kept coming up with excuses to keep going—different ammo, different drills, longer distances—because I just didn’t want to stop shooting it.

Yeah, I like to shoot anyway, but I really enjoyed the Forge H1. As I mentioned at the outset, Hammerli has its roots in the competition world, and those guns →



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FORGED EXCELLENCE

← always seemed to me to have a very European flavor. So why would a company with this background turn to a very American design for its first consumer-market pistol?

“It is the most iconic pistol in the world, and we believe we make the absolute best rimfire version of this style,” Osborn said.

While there are few .22s modeled on the 1911, the overall semiauto rimfire field is pretty crowded. Hammerli believes it can separate itself through a marketing effort that, like I said, focuses heavily on the survival/apocalyptic angle.

Osborn explained that this focus was a way to present the “fun side” of Hammerli Arms and separate the company from the everyday plinking approach taken by its competitors. He also said that the Forge H1 is just the beginning, and we can expect to see not only the Forge H1 lineup expanded but also even more “really innovative product family offerings.”



▲ As a blowback-operated pistol, the Forge H1 has a fixed barrel, and disassembly is similar but not identical to the process you’d use on a 1911.

I’m certainly looking forward to those. But in the meantime, the company has done a fantastic job with the Forge H1. It’s well built, accurate, dependable and a joy to shoot. Whether you’re actually looking for

a survival handgun or simply a fun plinker—or perhaps a gun to take to today’s action rimfire competitions—you’d be well served by the Hammerli Forge H1. It’s a solid gun at a great price. 

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ON THE WARPATH

BY RICHARD NANCE



**WATCHTOWER'S APACHE
DOUBLE-STACK 1911 IS A
COMPETITIVE SHOOTER'S
DREAM.**

Apache is a tough-sounding name. This tribe was the last in North America to be conquered, and its warriors, led by Geronimo, were greatly feared. “Operation Apache Snow” was the code name for a battle in which U.S. Army and South Vietnamese forces displaced the North Vietnamese from Hill 937—aka Hamburger Hill.

So if you’re going to name a pistol Apache, it better be tough. This new double-stack Government 1911 is made by Watchtower Firearms, a veteran-owned company headquartered in Spring, Texas. The firm names each of its firearms after a particular U.S. military operation. In fact, its own name is derived from Operation Watchtower, in which American forces seized Guadalcanal from the Japanese in 1943.

The Apache is something any warrior would be proud to carry onto the battlefield, but it’s targeted at competitive shooters. It’s also a limited-edition gun, and only 1,000 will be made.

The hefty 9mm pistol weighs 2.5 pounds when topped with the optional Trijicon SRO. The Apache comes with a 17-round and a 20-round magazine from Atlas Gunworks, so capacity will not be a limiting factor.

“We set out to build a competition double-stack 1911 with an amazingly fast return to zero, and I’d say we’ve more than accomplished that,” said Watchtower Firearms CEO Jason Colosky. A second-generation Marine, Colosky served in Force Reconnaissance throughout southwest Asia and southeast Africa.

Available in graphite and black or graphite and copper, the Apache looks battle or competition ready. Watchtower’s proprietary PVD (physical vapor deposition) coating on the slide, barrel, frame and all major components enhances durability and reliability. It also makes the gun easy to clean.

When you pick up the Apache, it feels like an extension of your →

ON THE WARPATH

← body. Its weight and balance leave no doubt that you're clutching a robust pistol. Its handling will bolster your confidence whether you're shooting a stage or facing a deadly threat.

When the competition is heating up and your palms begin to sweat, the last thing you need to worry about is losing control of your pistol.

Constructed on a pre-hardened 4140 stainless steel frame, the Apache sports Watchtower's proprietary composite grip, which has 360-degree checkering to help lock the Apache into your hand when firing. Despite its double-stack magazine design, the Apache maintains a narrow handhold thanks to its grip, which doesn't use panels like those

found on a traditionally configured 1911. The Watchtower logo is prominently displayed on either side.

In competition, efficient reloading is an important skill. The Apache's flared magazine well funnels your magazine into the pistol. The lip of a pistol's magazine well can hinder concealment, but on a competition pistol like the Apache, there's no reason to deny yourself the simplicity and speed advantage a flared magazine well provides.

The Apache's beavertail and undercut trigger guard facilitate a consistently high hold, which mitigates muzzle flip for faster, flatter shooting. The medium-length, flat-face trigger will be an easy reach for most shooters, and its width makes the trigger comfortable to press. A vertical slot near the front of the trigger adds a little flair.

A hole in the trigger face allows for overtravel adjustment, a feature you'll find on many competition-oriented pistols. Turning the overtravel screw enables you to eliminate any extra rearward movement of the trigger after the shot breaks. This not only saves time but minimizes the chance of your trigger press jerking the muzzle off-target.

Controls on the Apache are hard to miss and easy to operate. The →



▲ The copper accents on the slide stop, ambi thumb safety, skeletonized hammer, flat-face trigger and magazine release provide a handsome contrast to the graphite finish.



▲ The integral compensator reduces muzzle flip, and the deep slide serrations provide ample texture. The tri-top slide is serrated on top to reduce glare, and the sights are suppressor height.

WATCHTOWER FIREARMS
APACHE

TYPE: double-stack 1911
CALIBER: 9mm Luger
CAPACITY: 17+1, 20+1
BARREL: 4.6 in., Clark/Para ramped 416R; threaded w/compensator
OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 8.75/6/1.6 in.
WEIGHT: 2.5 lb. (w/Trijicon SRO)
CONSTRUCTION: 4140 stainless steel pre-hardened frame
SIGHTS: suppressor height drift-adjustable rear, green fiber-optic front; slide cut for Trijicon RMR footprint
TRIGGER: medium length, 3-4 lb. pull (factory spec)
SAFETIES: ambidextrous thumb, grip
PRICE: \$4,540 (as tested, w/Trijicon SRO)
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ON THE WARPATH

← grip safety features a pronounced memory bump, so even if your grip is less than perfect, you can disengage it.

An oversize, ambidextrous thumb safety is a welcome addition for anyone running the pistol with their non-dominant hand. The serrated thumb safety also makes a nice shelf for the thumb of your shooting hand. Downward thumb pressure helps counteract recoil forces that want to force the muzzle upward. The thumb safety operates smoothly yet snaps positively on and off.

The Apache is a bigger and heavier pistol than most people would carry, but it is well-suited for home defense and its ample accessory rail provides plenty of space to mount a full-size light. Accessory rails can complicate holster searches, but the Apache is compatible with holsters designed for the Staccato XC.

The 4.6-inch Clark/Para ramped 416R threaded barrel is housed inside the 4.25-inch tri-top cut slide. The 0.75-inch compensator screws to the barrel, blending seamlessly with the slide’s contour.

Compensators are becoming increasingly popular pistol accessories because they reduce muzzle flip by directing gases up, thus forcing the muzzle down. Shooting a heavy 9mm pistol like the Apache with a compensator almost feels like cheating. Fast and accurate hits just seem to happen.

Deep, vertical serrations both front and rear provide solid purchase for racking the Apache’s slide. “Apache” is etched into the slide on the left side across from the ejection port.

The slide is cut to accept an optics plate for mounting a red-dot sight with the Trijicon RMR footprint. You can also purchase the Apache with a Trijicon SRO already mounted to the slide. The SRO’s tall window makes it easy to find the dot—a difficult task for shooters used to traditional pistol sights.

The flat slide top and serrations



▲ The composite grip frame lacks panels and is surprisingly thin for a double-stack 1911. The grip features a mag well funnel, and the 20-round magazine is grooved for extra purchase.

ACCURACY RESULTS WATCHTOWER FIREARMS APACHE				
9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Hornady Critical Defense	115	1,182	12	1.8
Wilson Combat HBFN	135	927	15	1.7
Defiant Munitions Subsonic	135	986	7	2.2

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a Ransom Multi Cal Steady Rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots recorded on a Garmin Xero C1 chronograph placed adjacent to the muzzle. Abbreviation: HBFN, hollow-base flatnose

help mitigate glare, which could interfere with your ability to see the sights. The Apache ships with suppressor-height sights. The serrated rear sight is drift adjustable, while the front sight features a green fiber-optic insert. I found I could

see the sights through the window of the SRO, which made them a viable secondary sighting system should the red dot fail. Of course, shooters who aren’t fans of red dots could use these sights independently.

The Apache’s recoil is very

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The G3 family consistently punches above its price point, delivering performance on par and above far more expensive products. Which does raise the question: *what are those other guys charging you for?*



ON THE WARPATH

← light thanks to its substantial weight and the compensator. It comes with Dawson Precision Tool-Less Recoil System springs in seven-, eight- and nine-pound weights so you can tailor the slide's reciprocating force to the specific load you're using.

The lighter the recoil spring weight, the more quickly the slide will move rearward during extraction and ejection. It will also return with less force than with a heavier recoil spring. Of course, the opposite is also true.

Tuning the Apache to function optimally with a specific load provides a huge advantage in competition, where a every second counts and a malfunction could eliminate you from contention.

The spring you choose can also affect the pistol's recoil impulse, changing the way it feels when you shoot it. You can experiment with different recoil spring weights to see how they impact performance. For



▲ The Apache's accessory rail accommodates full-size weapon lights, and the gun is compatible with holsters designed for the Staccato XC.

testing, I left in the factory-installed eight-pound spring, and couldn't be happier with how the pistol performed.

At 25 yards using the Trijicon SRO, my best group measured just an inch using Wilson Combat's 135-grain

hollow-base flatnose ammunition. Most groups were between one and 2.5 inches, with the overall average group size registering 1.9 inches.

After confirming the Apache was accurate from the bench, I moved to 10 yards, where I picked up the →



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ON THE WARPATH

← tempo. I fired several multi-shot strings into the upper chest portion of the target.

As Colosky mentioned, the Apache is flat shooting. The SRO's 2.5 m.o.a. dot was easy to track through recoil because muzzle rise was minimal and recovery predictable. The flat trigger was smooth, with very little take-up before reaching the wall. It broke cleanly and had a short, discernible reset.

As a result, the Apache was easy to shoot with speed and accuracy. If you are a proficient pistol shooter, the Apache will make you even better.

While the Apache's slide-to-frame fit was tight, there were zero malfunctions during testing. I've tested high-end 1911s and 2011s that were beautifully crafted but struggled to function even to the level of a run-of-the-mill pistol. The trick is to have the frame and slide fit tightly enough for optimal accuracy but not so tightly that the slide is hard to

rack, or so tightly that feeding and chambering suffer.

The Apache's fit was just right—tight for accuracy but reliable and also easy to rack.

"No corners are cut in the design and assembly of our Apache," Colosky said. "From the Tool-Less recoil spring system to our proprietary PVD coating, which even includes the disconnecter, every detail is deliberate."

The Apache ships with a soft pistol case, Tool-Less recoil springs, the two magazines, a pistol lock and a lifetime warranty card. To show its support for the military, law enforcement and emergency medical services personnel, Watchtower offers first responder discounts ranging from 10 to 15 percent off suggested retail price, which is \$3,990 without an optic and \$4,540 with a Trijicon SRO mounted. The company even offers financing.

Just as the Apache warriors struck



A The Apache's sights are suppressor height and co-witness with this Trijicon red dot—and likely will with many others. The face of the rear is serrated to reduce glare.

fear in the hearts of their enemies, the Watchtower Apache may strike fear in the hearts of your competitors—or at least invoke jealousy in the hearts of other shooters sharing the range. If you're looking to add a high-end, high-capacity, double-stack 1911 to your collection, Watchtower's Apache should be on your short list. 🎯

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REVOLVER WITH A STING

BY J. SCOTT RUPP



**RUGER'S
SUPER RED-
HAWK .22
HORNET
WILL APPEAL
TO VARMINT
HUNTERS
AND THOSE
WHO JUST
LOVE UNIQUE
WHEELGUNS.**

There are guns you know you want, and then there are guns you don't know you want—until someone builds them. Bill Ruger had a knack for dreaming up guns that captured Americans' imaginations and producing designs that shooters just had to have. So he would have been proud of the new Super Redhawk .22 Hornet.

Bill had a hand in the design of the Redhawk and Super Redhawk, the hefty double actions chambered for the big boomers like the .44 Magnum—and in the case of the Super Redhawk the .454 Casull and

.480 Ruger as well. And while the .22 Hornet seems an odd choice for this beefy revolver, according to Ruger product manager Graham Rockwell, Bill actually had an interest in chambering this particular revolver for the Hornet as far back as 1996.

Now, nearly three decades later, we have one. This particular Super Redhawk is a large eight-shot double action/single action, sporting a 9.5-inch target-crowned barrel with five-groove rifling and a 1:9 twist. Overall length is 15.9 inches, and weight is 66 ounces—just a tad over four pounds.

Sights include a HiViz green fiber-optic front that's integral to a removable black base secured to the muzzle with three screws. If you don't care for the fiber optic, →

REVOLVER WITH A STING

← SHOPRUGER.COM sells brass-bead and red-ramp options for the Super Redhawk. The rear sight is a fully adjustable square notch with a white outline.

One of the changes made from the Redhawk to the Super Redhawk was the extension of the frame forward onto the barrel. This was done to add strength, but it also permitted the Super Redhawk’s topstrap to be machined for scope mounts. The gun has twin cuts designed for Ruger scope rings/bases, and a pair of

these comes with the gun, in stainless to match the finish.

Because it’s most likely shooters will install some glass on this revolver, the hammer is low profile so you won’t have issues accessing it underneath the objective of a scope. The hammer is also nicely serrated to reduce any chance your thumb could slip while cocking it for single action.

The Super Redhawk features one of Ruger’s innovations: a coil spring instead of a leaf spring to power the

hammer. The design permits a better trigger pull, and my sample’s double-action pull averaged nine pounds, 10 ounces while the single-action pull was one pound, 15 ounces.

The cylinder release is a push-button that’s grooved for sure operation. The cylinder notches are offset from the chambers, which provides added strength because there’s more steel surrounding those chambers.

Another strengthening feature is Ruger’s triple-locking system. The cylinder locks at the rear via the crane latch plunger; at the bottom courtesy of the cylinder stops; and through a spring-loaded front latch in the crane that snaps into a recess in the frame.

The frame is Ruger’s peg style, which permits a full-wraparound grip. The advantage here is that you get the benefit of grip cushioning instead of bare metal right where most of the recoil force is transmitted into your hand—although with the Hornet it’s not much of an issue. The Super Redhawk comes with a black Hogue Tamer grip that’s pebbled and sports finger grooves.

Now, about that Hornet. First off, it’s not your everyday .22. A center-fire rifle cartridge introduced in 1930 by Winchester, it arose from early experiments on a .22 WCF cartridge conducted by Capt. Grosvenor Watkyns and Col. Townsend Whelen. Winchester jumped on board the Hornet train even before any rifles were available for it, although long guns in the Hornet followed within three years of the cartridge’s debut.

It’s got a rim, which makes it a good revolver cartridge candidate, but unusual for a revolver round it is a bottleneck case with a five-degree shoulder—almost a taper, really, that runs from .278 inch to .244 inch and terminates in a neck diameter of .242 inch. The Hornet fires a .224-inch-diameter bullet, and overall length is 1.723 inches. It can handle bullets from 35 to 50 or so grains, and nominal velocity for the 35-grainer is just over 3,000 fps. →



▲ The revolver holds eight rounds of .22 Hornet. The Hornet was originally a rifle cartridge, but it proved to be accurate and soft-recoiling in the Super Redhawk and should especially appeal to varminters.

ACCURACY RESULTS RUGER SUPER REDHAWK				
.22 Hornet	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
25 Yds.				
Remington AccuTip	35	2,260	30	0.8
Hornady V-Max	35	2,153	29	0.9
Federal American Eagle Tipped Varmint	35	2,192	48	1.0
Remington HP Rifle PSP	45	1,833	36	2.1
50 Yds.				
Remington AccuTip	35	2,260	30	1.5
Hornady V-Max	35	2,153	29	1.6
Federal American Eagle Tipped Varmint	35	2,192	48	2.0

Notes: Twenty-five yard accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups; 50-yard results are averages of three five-shot groups, both fired from a Ransom Multi Cal Steady Rest and using a Burris 1.5-4X handgun scope. Velocities are averages of 15 shots recorded 10 feet from the muzzle with a ProChrono DLX. Abbreviation: PSP, pointed softpoint

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REVOLVER WITH A STING

← Okay, so far nothing screams “Yes, you must chamber me in one of the strongest revolvers on the market!” Ah, but pressure specs tell a little bit of a different story. The SAAMI maximum average pressure spec for the .44 Magnum—one of the Super Redhawk’s mainstay chamberings—is 36,000 psi. The powerful .480 Ruger? 48,000 psi. The “little” .22 Hornet’s MAP is 49,000 psi. Of the standard-production Super Redhawk offerings, only the .454 Casull’s pressure standard is higher at 65,000 psi.

I had assumed this high pressure was tied directly to Ruger’s choice of the Super Redhawk as the platform for the Hornet, but Rockwell set me straight. He said the Super Redhawk was chosen as the platform simply because there are a wider array of barrel blanks available for it.

He said strength had nothing to do with it, and I think another benefit here is that the Super Redhawk is so easy to scope. Plus, again, Bill Ruger was already looking at this particular gun/cartridge combination nearly 30 years ago.

The .22 Hornet is primarily a varmint/small game cartridge, although some World War II military survival rifles were chambered in it. Like I mentioned, in a rifle it’ll do 3,000 fps. Take for instance Hornady’s 35-grain V-Max, which produces 3,070 fps out of a 24-inch rifle test barrel. It generates 732 ft.-lbs. of energy at the muzzle. When zeroed at 200 yards it will drop 17.5 inches at 300 yards.

But those are rifle ballistics, and we’re talking a 9.5-inch revolver here. The same load fired out of the Super Redhawk leaves the muzzle at 2,153 fps, bringing 360 ft.-lbs. of energy. It would take a much better shot than I am to consider zeroing this handgun at 200 yards, much less shooting it at 300, so I ran the numbers on what is perhaps a more realistic scenario.

Zero the Super Redhawk at 50 yards, and the V-Max bullet will drop 1.2 inches at 100, 6.3 inches at 150 yards and 17 at 200. That’s plenty flat



▲ The .22 Hornet (r.) is a centerfire round, unlike the .22 Magnum (c.) or .22 Long Rifle (l.), and it’s significantly more powerful than either one.



▲ One of the improvements from the Redhawk to the Super Redhawk was the extension of the frame, which made it stronger and also possible to machine scope-mount cuts.

for varmints, although you would be running low on energy when you hit 200 yards—91 ft.-lbs. with this load. By comparison, out of a rifle you’d have 192 ft.-lbs. at the same distance. That’s a consideration for bigger critters like coyotes but moot for prairie dogs and similar-size varmints.

Rockwell said getting this cartridge to play well with a wheelgun required a bit of work.

“We did have to overcome a few design challenges in making the .22 Hornet Super Redhawk,” he said. “Specifically we worked through the unique rotation and extraction of eight bottleneck cartridges, properly directing barrel gap gases, and →

RUGER SUPER REDHAWK

TYPE: double-action/single-action centerfire revolver

CALIBER: .22 Hornet

CAPACITY: 8

BARREL: 9.5 in., 1:9 twist, target crown

OVERALL LENGTH: 15.9 in.

WEIGHT: 66 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: brushed stainless steel barrel, frame, cylinder

GRIPS: black Hogue Tamer

TRIGGER: 9 lb., 10 oz. double action; 1 lb., 15 oz. single action

SIGHTS: fully adjustable white outline rear, green fiber-optic front; topstrap cut for supplied rings/bases

SAFETY: transfer bar

PRICE: \$1,499

MANUFACTURER: RUGER, RUGER.COM



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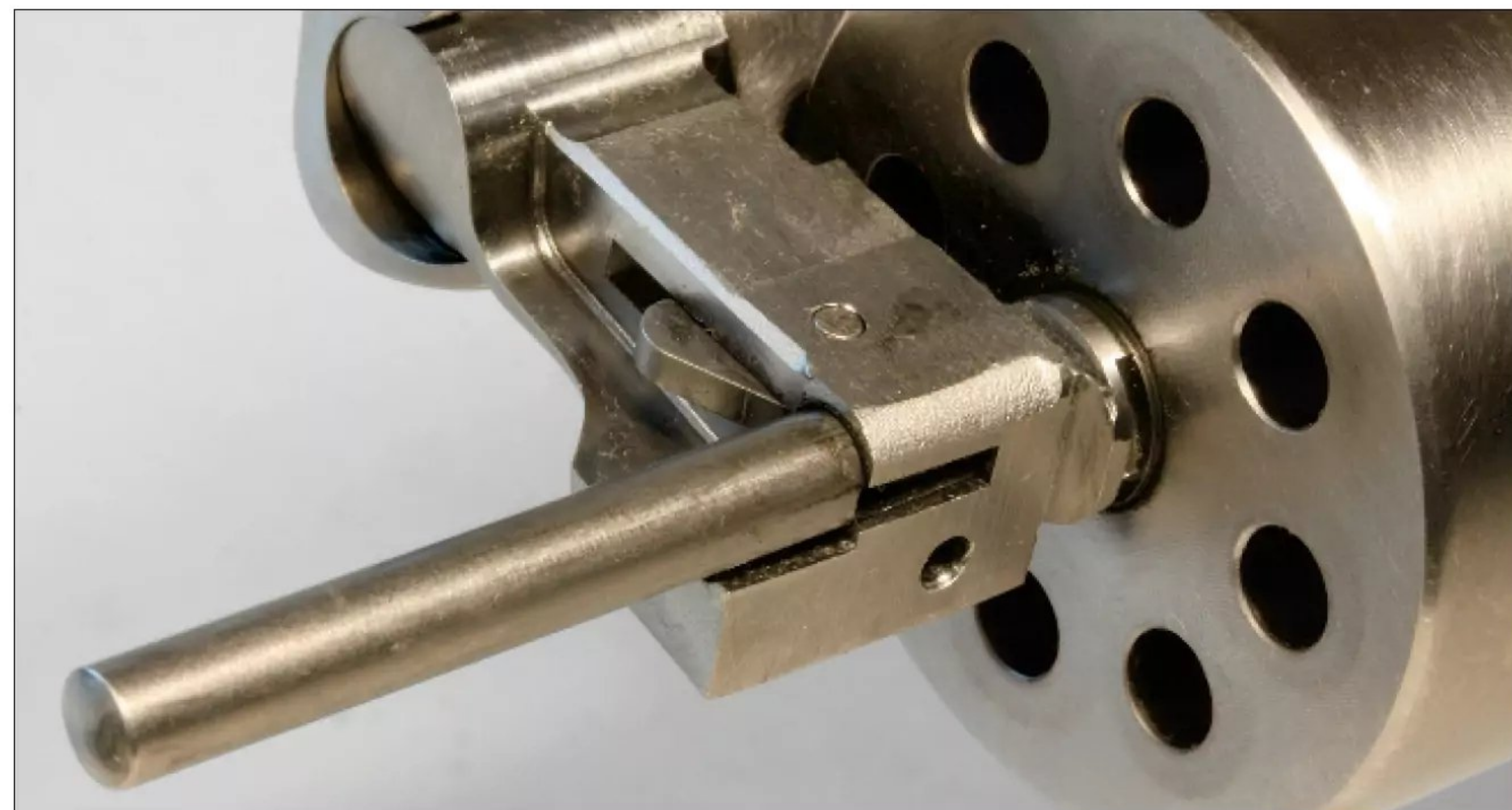
REVOLVER WITH A STING

← the function of the ejector with .22 Hornet rounds.”

It also required a different twist rate. Rifle barrels for the Hornet typically have a 1:14 twist, but the Super Redhawk’s twist is 1:9, which is much faster. I asked Rockwell how they arrived at this rate, and he said the company’s original work with the Hornet in a revolver used this 1:9 twist, and they simply continued to run with that.

It certainly seems to have worked out because in my testing the Super Redhawk proved to be quite accurate. With a Burris 1.5-4X long-eye-relief handgun scope mounted in the supplied rings, the revolver delivered sub-inch accuracy at 25 yards, as you can see in the accompanying chart.

And if you’ve been paying close attention all these years, you’ll note that I departed from our practice of listing loads in ascending order by bullet weight and then by accu-



▲ One of the hallmarks of Ruger’s double actions is a spring-loaded front latch in the crane that snaps into a recess in the frame.

racy. Here I went straight accuracy because as a gun that will appeal to those wishing to hit small or distant targets, for the Super Redhawk accuracy is everything.

Anyway, only the heavier Remington load was over an inch at our standard 25-yard testing distance. Rockwell said designers did see that certain bullet weights and styles outperformed others due to the faster 1:9 twist. In other words, you’ll

want to experiment to find the best-shooting loads. That’s something you typically have to do for a handgun regardless, but for a gun you want or need to be a tackdriver it’s even more important.

After the 25-yard testing was complete, I moved the target back to 50 yards and fired three five-shot groups with all but the 45-grain Remington load. These results were basically in line with the 25-yard groups, →

A large advertisement for Black Hills Ammunition. The background is a dark, industrial setting. In the center, a bullet has just struck a glass pane, creating a large, star-shaped crack pattern. The word "CONTROL" is written in large, stylized, metallic letters across the top left, with the crack pattern appearing to flow through it. To the right of "CONTROL", the text "YOU'LL NEVER NEED UNTIL YOU DO." is written in a clean, sans-serif font. Below this, a block of text reads: "IF YOU MEASURE ONLY TWICE TO CUT ONCE. CONGRATULATIONS. YOU'RE NOT OBSESSED LIKE WE ARE. HERE AT OUR BALLISTIC LAB WE STOP AT NOTHING TO TEST EVERY CONCEIVABLE REAL-WORLD CONDITION UNTIL WE REACH PERFECTION." At the bottom center, the Black Hills Ammunition logo is displayed, featuring a circular emblem with "THE POWER OF" at the top, "BLACK HILLS" in the center, and "Performance" at the bottom. Below the logo, the website "WWW.BLACK-HILLS.COM" is listed, followed by social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. At the very bottom, the text "TO LOCATE A DEALER NEAR YOU, PLEASE CALL 800.568.6625" is printed.

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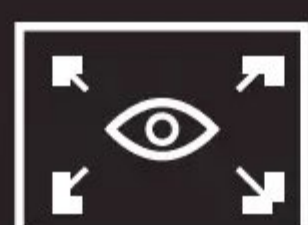
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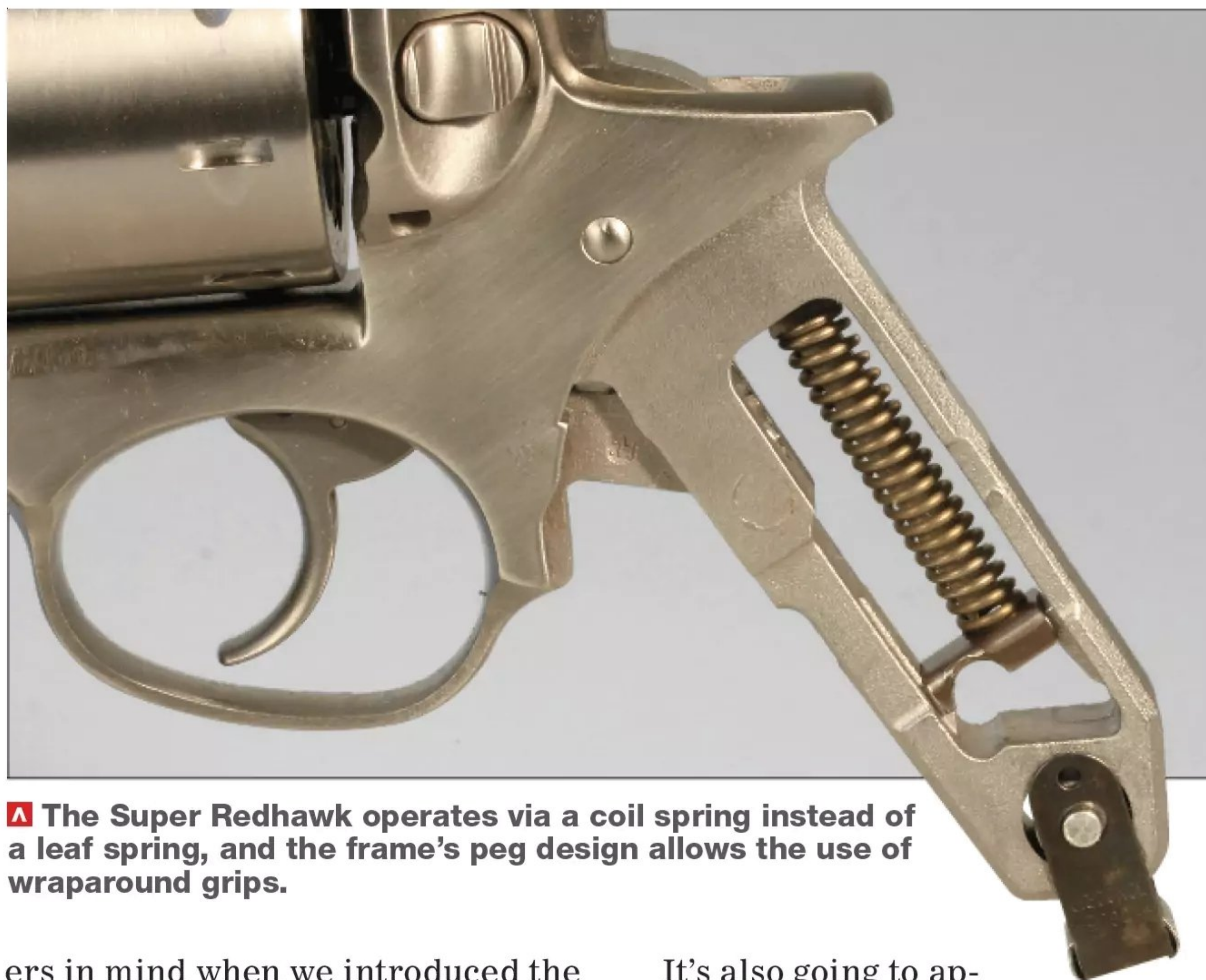
REVOLVER WITH A STING

← the 50-yard figures being roughly twice the 25-yard ones, so the Super Redhawk is holding its accuracy downrange.

I also fired the gun offhand, double action, with the iron sights from 15 to about 25 yards. The results were about what I expected. This is a heavy gun and not particularly suited to shooting offhand, although I certainly could perforate a soda can or similar target at reasonable ranges.

While Super Redhawk's muzzle blast is commensurate with the high pressures, there's very little recoil—especially with a handgun scope up top. Set up thusly, it would be super fun on a prairie dog town, spot-and-stalk groundhogs and perhaps a good tool on coyotes and foxes. A set of shooting sticks would definitely be a good addition for the hiking hunter, and the Super Redhawk rested nicely in sticks.

“We absolutely had varmint shoot-



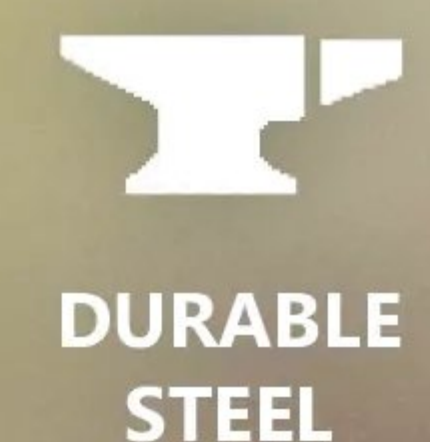
▲ The Super Redhawk operates via a coil spring instead of a leaf spring, and the frame's peg design allows the use of wraparound grips.

ers in mind when we introduced the .22 Hornet Super Redhawk, but we are confident others will enjoy it for revolver target shooting based on the high velocities, downrange energy and minimal recoil,” Rockwell said.

It's also going to appeal to Ruger superfans and collectors—as well as anyone who loves revolvers and wants to own and shoot something that's as unique as this gun is. You know you want one.



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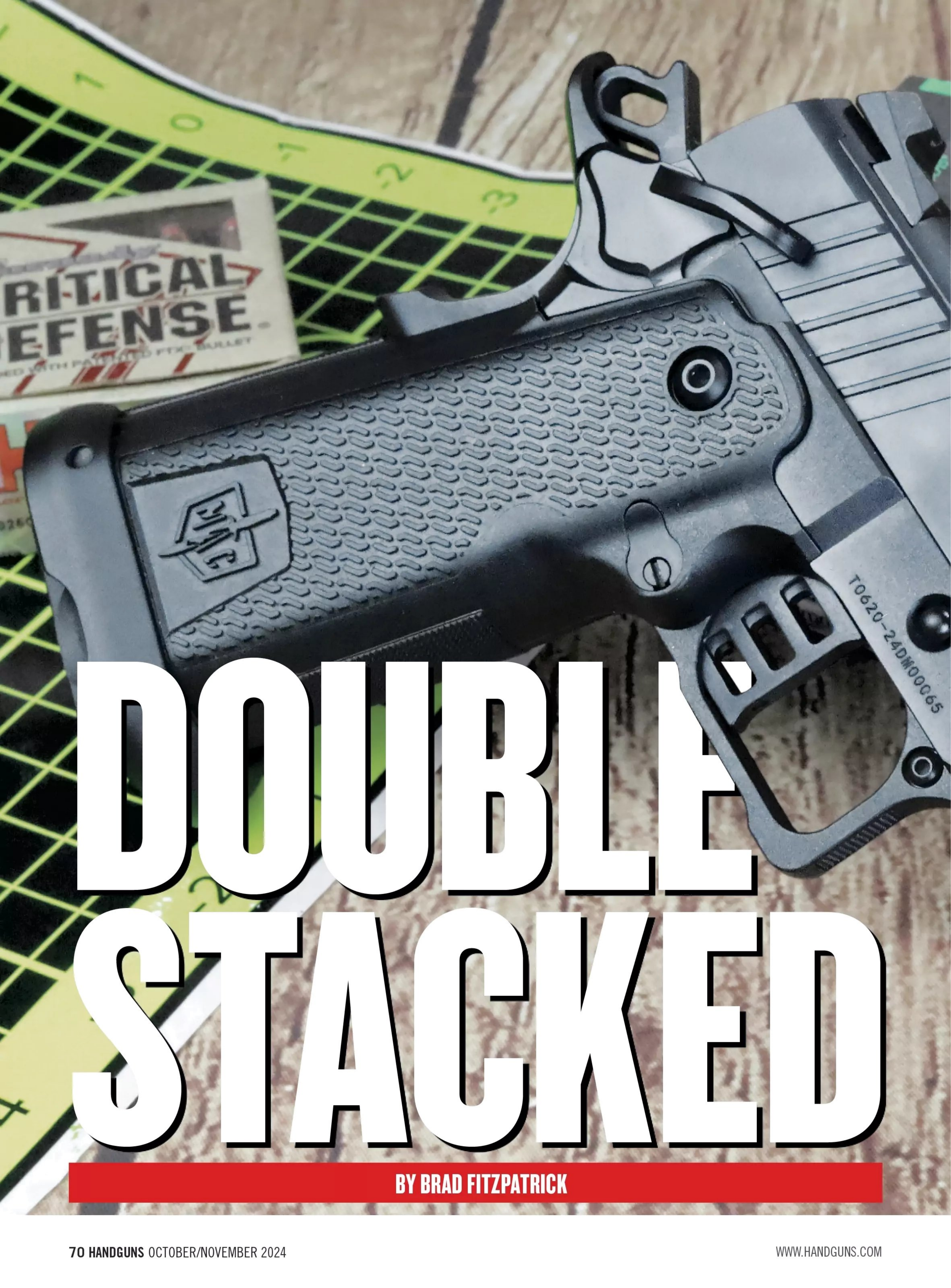
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DOUBLE STACKED

BY BRAD FITZPATRICK



THE NEW MILITARY ARMAMENT CORP. PISTOL HAS EVERYTHING YOU WANT IN A HIGH-CAP 1911 9MM—AT A PRICE YOU CAN AFFORD.

There aren't a lot of firearm designs that remain relevant more than a century after they were developed, but John Browning's 1911 semiauto is the exception to that rule. But despite its solid foundation as a reliable fighting pistol, the 1911 has undergone many upgrades over the last 100 years. One of the recent trends is the adoption of the double-stack magazine design, which offers capacities on par with polymer guns. The problem, of course, is that these new double-stacks cost quite a bit more than traditional 1911s.

Military Armament Corp.'s new MAC 1911 Double Stack changes that by offering a 1911 9mm high-cap for under \$1,100. That's about \$300 less than the Springfield Prodigy and \$800 less than Kimber's new KDS9c pistol, and more than \$1,000 less than Staccato's C2. But how does the budget-friendly MAC, ahem, stack up against its pricier rivals?

The MAC 1911 Double Stack is built by Turkish manufacturer Tisas to Military Armament Corp. specifications. The frame and slide are made from forged 4140 carbon steel, and the grip module is made from glass-filled reinforced polymer. The 4.25-inch button-rifled bull barrel features a 1:10 right-hand twist and a quench-polish-quench (QPQ) Tenifer finish. The barrel also comes with an 11-degree target crown and lacks the traditional barrel bushing found on classic 1911s.

MAC specs indicate the gun weighs 30 ounces, although my postal scale registered 36.5 ounces with unloaded magazine. Overall length is 7.9 inches, and height is 5.8 inches. Width across the safeties is about 1.5 inches and the slide measures 0.9 inch wide.

The flat-face trigger is skeletonized and MAC advertises a 4.75-pound trigger pull. The manual safety is extended and ambidextrous, and the beavertail grip safety has a lengthened tang.

The slide gets the same QPQ →

DOUBLE STACKED

← finish as the barrel, while the frame and small parts receive a black Cerakote finish. Combine that with the black grip module and you get a monochromatic pistol. However, the finish is pretty good, and it's better than some radical combination of colors. Throughout testing the finish held up well despite a fair amount of range use and the gun being carried in a chest holster. Even the interior metal finish looked good, with minimal machine marks.

The MAC's polymer grip module wraps around the front- and back-

strap and includes the squared-off trigger guard. It's a beefy grip with 25 lines per inch checkering on the front- and backstraps and raised polymer lines on the side-panel portion. The texturing is effective and provides a good hold on the pistol, but I prefer the more modern look and feel of the Springfield Prodigy's micro-texture surface. The grip texturing is one of very few elements of the MAC that feels cheap to me.

Also included with the gun is a removable aluminum magazine well. At 1.6 inches wide it's large enough

to be effective, but it also adds so much width that those who plan to carry this pistol concealed will likely want to remove the mag well. Cutouts in the magazine well allow you to strip magazines manually should the need arise.

The grip design and magazines are, of course, the big news on this pistol. Two 17-round Tisas Checkmate magazines are included, and the gun will accept STI 2011 magazines as well. That's a higher capacity than the standard Kimber KDS9c Black pistol, which comes with 15-round magazines.

The MAC 1911 Double Stack has the same capacity as the Springfield Prodigy, although the Springfield's second magazine holds 20 rounds, and the Kimber KDS9c Rail offers an 18-round magazine. The MAC's metal magazines are well-constructed with solid but not overly heavy springs, and they fit securely in the gun.

Like so many modern pistols, the MAC 1911 Double Stack features a slide that's cut for optics, on the Trijicon RMR footprint in this case. A low-profile U-notch rear sight is dovetailed into the removable cover plate, and there are large, squared-off integral sights affixed to the plate with 6/32-inch screws. The plate is solidly constructed and provides a secure interface for the optic.

I was actually quite impressed →



▲ Controls are standard 1911 while the flat-face trigger features some unique skeletonizing. Slide serrations are found fore and aft, and the frame sports a four-slot accessory rail.



▲ The gun comes with a slide plate that accepts RMR-footprint red dots (l.) and incorporates a rear sight (r.) as well as a cover plate complete with dovetailed U-notch sight.

MILITARY ARMAMENT CORP. MAC 1911 DOUBLE STACK

TYPE: double-stack 1911

CALIBER: 9mm Luger

CAPACITY: 17+1

BARREL: 4.25 in. bull, QPQ Tenifer finish

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 7.9/5.8/1.6 (w/mag well)

WEIGHT: 36.5 oz.

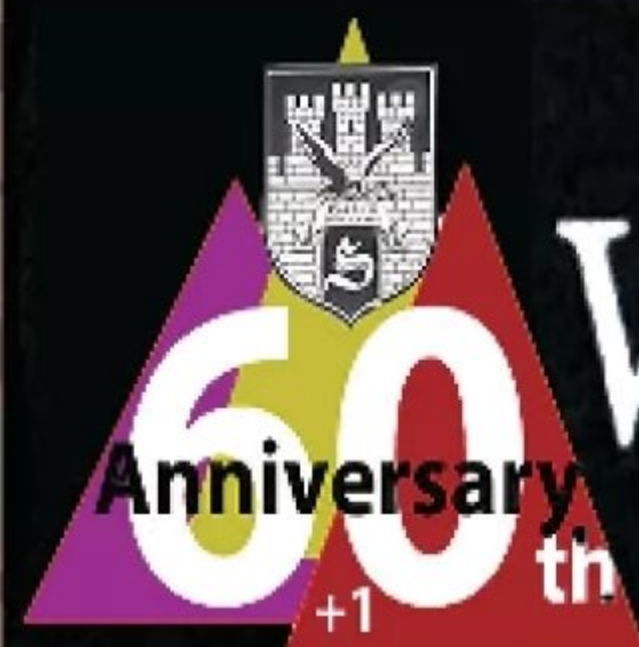
CONSTRUCTION: QPQ Tenifer-finished slide, black Cerakote-finished frame; polymer grip module

TRIGGER: 4 lb. 12 oz. (measured)

SIGHTS: U-notch rear, fiber-optic front; slide cut for Trijicon RMR footprint

PRICE: \$1,099

MANUFACTURER: Military Armament Corp,
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Blued 1911, 10 rd. single stack mag. 9mm \$24.95 #RPM269



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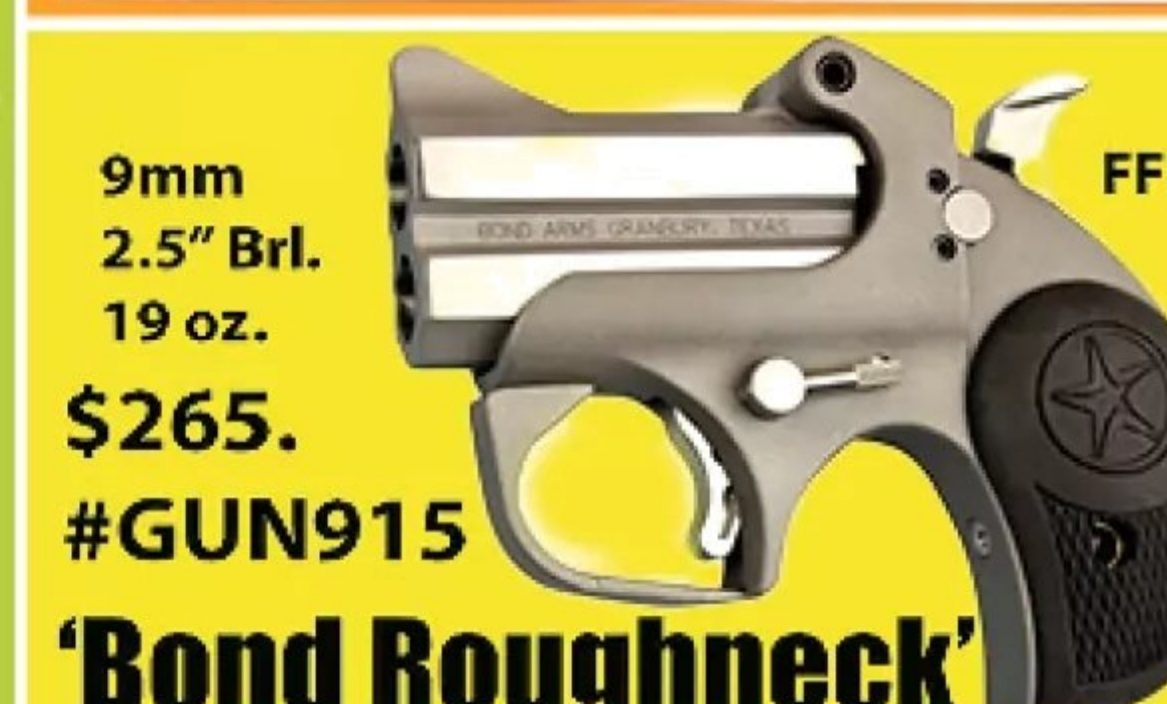
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DOUBLE STACKED

← with the U-notch rear sight. It's durable and easy to use, although I'll admit I prefer U-notch sights to the more traditional square-notch profile in the first place. The rear sight won't snag when you draw the gun, and there's a relieved portion of the rear sight that reduces the risk of glare when shooting in full sun. The front portion of the rear sight also features a flat face so you can cycle the pistol one-handed in times of crisis.

The front sight is also dovetailed into the slide and features a high-visibility green fiber-optic bar. A spare pipe is included.

Other niceties include a skeletonized hammer and a 1913 rail for mounting accessories. The controls include the extended ambi safety mentioned earlier and a traditional push-button magazine release catch located just aft of the trigger guard. A transverse slide stop/takedown pin must be removed to separate the slide and frame for routine maintenance.

Because of the MAC's bushingless design you'll need a special tool to disassemble the gun, although 1911 owners the world over have found a paper clip to be the simplest and most widely available instrument for taking down bull barrel 9mm 1911s. MAC understands that instead of developing a special tool you're almost certain to lose, it may as well just include a paper clip along with the gun, and you'll find one inside the zippered soft case. I love it.

MAC lists the single-action trigger pull weight at 4.75 pounds, and I found that to be accurate, averaging exactly that for 10 pulls on an RCBS trigger gauge. The break is consistent and clean.

I performed the accuracy test with the iron sights, and the MAC did quite well. The smallest groups averaged just over 1.5 inches for five shots at 25 yards, and four of the 20 five-shot test groups measured under 1.75 inches.

It is, as I mentioned, rather wide for daily concealed carry, but with the magazine well removed it would ride similarly to a 1911 Commander.

The grip module and ambi safeties do add some extra width, and fully loaded weight would put it over 40 ounces.

That added heft does wonders for mitigating recoil, though, and this was one of the softest-shooting 1911 9mms I've tested. Recoil was minimal and very manageable, which allowed me to shoot the gun quickly. I ran a series of drills from seven yards using a Trijicon red dot and found that the pistol shoots very fast and flat. It was also completely reliable, firing defensive and target loads of 115 and 124 grains without a single hiccup. Someone searching for a 1911 for personal defense and weekend IDPA or Steel Challenge competition shoots will be well-served by the MAC.

As I said, the grip texture isn't my favorite among the various DS 1911s out there, and after a long day of shooting the gun I wish I'd worn gloves. But the controls work well,

and the manual safety clicks securely into the Safe and Fire positions. The cavernous mag well effectively speeds up reloads, and the front and rear slide serrations work fine, although I did wish they were a bit more aggressive.

When the gun arrived the internals were very well lubricated and required a wipe-down before use, but that's better than a gun shipping dry. There was a layer of lubricant between the slide cut and cover plate that made it difficult to remove that cover when switching to a red dot, but after the initial wipe-down the issue was resolved.

Because it's built to 1911 specs, the MAC 1911 Double Stack will fit in standard 1911 Commander-length holsters—provided the holster is designed to accommodate a rail. The 1911 belt holsters I had on hand did not, but I do have a Kenai Chest Holster from Gunfighters Inc. →



▲ The MAC features a ramped bull barrel that doesn't require a bushing. The muzzle sports an 11-degree target crown.

ACCURACY RESULTS MAC 1911 DOUBLE STACK				
9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	115	1,111	12	1.6
Fiocchi FMJ	115	1,120	20	2.7
Magtech FMJ	124	1,164	25	2.8
Sierra JHP	124	1,089	13	1.9
Federal HST JHP	147	970	8	2.3

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a fixed rest. Velocity figures are 10-shot averages recorded on a LabRadar at the muzzle. Abbreviations: FMJ, full metal jacket; JHP, jacketed hollowpoint

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DOUBLE STACKED

← that I use to carry my 10mm Rock Island 1911, and it accommodated the MAC.

For backcountry hunting adventures where I don't need 10mm punch, the MAC would serve as an excellent backup gun, and because the chest holster distributes weight so well across the shoulders, the gun is no burden. With its 17 round magazine the gun would be a great choice for camping, hiking and kayaking.

The MAC 1911 Double Stack is a more basic pistol than its more expensive competitors, but it performed well in testing and proved to be reliable. I don't think it's as good-looking as the Springfield or Kimber—both of which I have shot and tested—but the reliability and accuracy of the MAC were equally good as those guns. The slide on the MAC doesn't run quite as smoothly as the others, but the difference is minor.

No, it's not quite as pretty as the



▲ The MAC ships with two magazines—metal Tisas Checkmates that offer up to 17 rounds of 9mm.

more expensive 1911 DS 9mms, but the MAC is a robust gun that offers a much lower price of entry for playing in the double-stack market. It is a solid firearm with a long list of features. It's also a versatile gun that's suitable for self-defense, backcountry carry and competition.

Clearly, MAC designed this pistol to be a working double-stack, and in that role it excels. It's an affordable

entry into the double-stack market without sacrificing what really counts: durable and shooter-friendly design, reliable performance and excellent accuracy. Aside from some small features I'd change, I believe there are very few flies in the MAC 1911 Double Stack's ointment. In other words, it does stack up quite well against the other double-stacks on the market today. ○

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9MM



SPRINGFIELD HELLCAT PRO COMP OSP

A FEW YEARS BACK, SPRINGFIELD ARMORY added an external compensator to its Hellcat to reduce recoil, and the results were exceptional—but at the expense of holster compatibility and concealment. The Illinois-based company set out to accomplish more. By reconfiguring the slide and porting the barrel itself, the Hellcat Pro Comp OSP (optical sight pistol) was born, delivering recoil management without changing the Hellcat Pro footprint.

The Pro Comp features an outstanding capacity for a micro-compact, with a flush-fit 15-round and an extended 17-round magazine included. Versions with 10- and 15-round magazines are also available as well.

The gun has a 3.7-inch hammer-forged barrel for an overall length of 6.6 inches. Height is 4.8 inches with the flush-fit mag, and weight with that same magazine is just 21 ounces.

The grip is only an inch wide, but even so most users are going to be able to obtain a complete purchase without

resorting to the extended magazine, and mild finger grooves provide relief for smaller hands. The grip also features an indentation on each side for the thumb and trigger finger.

Springfield's skate-tape-like Adaptive Grip Texture wraps around the frame, and there are textured "indexing patches" located slightly behind the dust cover on each side. These provide the shooter an easily recognizable place to rest their trigger finger, with the same service afforded for their thumb on the other side. Last, the Hellcat is outfitted with a set of low-profile controls to reduce snagging; these favor right-handed operation.

While the frame is that of your typical Hellcat Pro, the slide on the Pro Comp is where all the magic happens. A relief is cut where you would typically find the front sight, allowing the ported barrel to vent its gases toward the sky when the trigger is pulled. As iron sights are still important, a new dovetail is cut slightly behind the barrel port, and a tritium

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY HELLCAT PRO COMP OSP

TYPE: striker-fired semiauto

CALIBER: 9mm Luger

CAPACITY: 17, 15; 10- and 15-round-only versions available

BARREL: 3.7 in., Melonite-finished hammer-forged carbon steel; integral compensator

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 6.6/4.8/1.0 in.

WEIGHT: 21.0 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: Melonite-finished billet-machined carbon steel slide w/compensator cut; black polymer frame

SIGHTS: Tactical Rack U-notch drift-adjustable rear, tritium/luminescent front; slide cut on Shield RMSc footprint

TRIGGER: 6.75 lb. pull (measured)

SAFETIES: trigger lever, striker drop

PRICE: \$699

MANUFACTURER: Springfield Armory, springfield-armory.com

front sight pressed into place. This placement protects it from the escaping gases while maximizing the pistol's sight radius to retain accuracy. →

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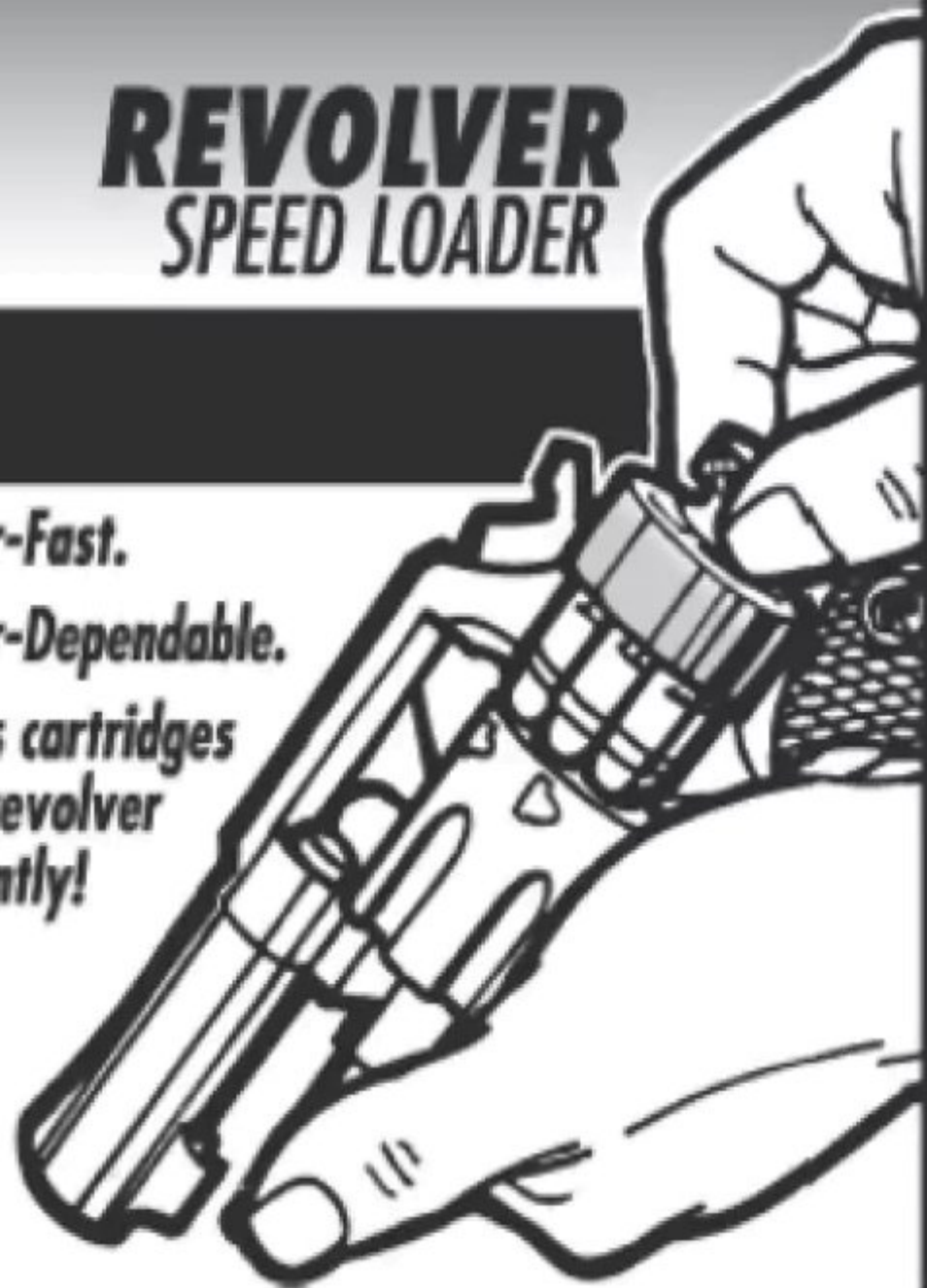
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HANDGUNS | FIRING LINE REPORT

← The front sight is paired with a white-outline U-notch rear sight. This combination all but self-aligns when you present the pistol properly. As the Pro Comp hails from the OSP family, it leaves the factory with an optics cut—in this case the Shield RMSc footprint. The pistol does not ship with adapter plates,

although several are available from the aftermarket.

I do advise sticking with the native footprint, as the extra height provided by said plates will cause your red dot to obstruct the factory iron sights. Springfield kindly provided a Shield RMSc for my testing, and I found the fitment to be



▲ The Pro Comp's simple control layout is unchanged from previous versions. The grip features Springfield's Adaptive Grip Texture for a secure hold even on such a slim grip.



▲ The big deal with the new Hellcat Pro Comp OSP is the ported barrel paired with a slide cut to vent gases upward, which reduces felt recoil and muzzle rise—and without altering the gun's outer dimensions.



▲ Sights are the excellent pairing of the Tactical Rack U-notch rear, which you can use to manipulate the slide, along with a tritium/luminescent front for reliable sighting in any conditions.

ACCURACY RESULTS | SPRINGFIELD ARMORY HELLCAT PRO COMP OSP

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
HSM/Hornady XTP	115	1,093	10	1.8
Speer Gold Dot HP	124	1,091	13	1.5
Federal Hydra-Shok Deep JHP	135	970	27	0.9

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 15 yards from a sandbag rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots recorded five feet from the muzzle with a Caldwell G2 Chronograph. Abbreviations: HP, hollowpoint; JHP, jacketed hollowpoint.

exceptional. While the Pro Comp isn't available in this particular combination, Springfield does sell the polymer-bodied Shield SMSc, which has the same footprint, on its web store.

I tucked the Hellcat Pro Comp in a DeSantis Inner Piece 2.0 holster and headed to the range. My basic movements were unhindered during range setup, as was sitting in a bench-rested position. I began with some dry fire, which revealed a stiff, deliberate trigger at just shy of seven pounds, so a negligent discharge should not be in the cards—especially when you factor in the trigger's lengthy stroke.

It is by no means a "match" trigger, which is a positive quality in a defensive firearm. The same holds true for the reset, which I found to be on the long side, but that staves off the possibility of bump-firing an extra round under stress.

The results of the formal accuracy test were impressive, as you can see in the accompanying chart—particularly when you consider that each load was built for terminal performance in lieu of pristine accuracy.

However, the best features were displayed when I put the compensator to work. Landing double-taps on a 12x20 IPSC silhouette proved exceptionally fast, with my fastest pair coming in at 0.19 second. Both shots also landed squarely within the 6x11-inch A-zone, satisfying the flat-shooting claim this rendition carries.

My range day came to an end after exhausting more than 300 rounds of mixed ammunition, all without a single failure to feed, fire or extract. When choosing a defensive pistol, this is of critical importance—a malfunction could cost you your life. Next to this is how comfortable the gun is to carry, as something bulky is more likely to be left on the dresser. I found Springfield Armory's approach checked all of the boxes while remaining enjoyable to shoot at the range. So who says there's no such thing as a free lunch?

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KELTEC P15

KELTEC P15

TYPE: striker-fired semiauto

CALIBER: 9mm

CAPACITY: 15+1, 12+1

BARREL: 4 in.

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 6.6/5.0/0.9 in.

WEIGHT: 16 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: steel slide, polymer frame; add-on backstrap supplied

TRIGGER: 3 lb., 12 oz. pull (measured)

SIGHTS: adjustable tritium rear, HiViz tritium/fiber-optic front

SAFETIES: striker; user-selectable grip, magazine disconnect

PRICE: \$450

MANUFACTURER: KelTec, KELTECWEAPONS.COM

OVER ITS 33-YEAR HISTORY, KELTEC HAS offered a wide variety of handguns, but until relatively recently if you wanted a striker-fired 9mm you had to look elsewhere. That changed with the introduction of the P15, which is offered in polymer- and aluminum-frame versions. My sample was the former.

The P15 offers a 15-round capacity with its extended magazine while weighing just 16 ounces. It sports a four-inch barrel, with an overall length of 6.6 inches. Height is five inches, and it's 0.875 inch across the slide. Numbers like those put the P15 right in the concealed-carry wheelhouse.

The steel slide has serrations front and back. The sights are a cut above what you might expect to find on a pistol with a suggested retail price of \$450. The front is a HiViz H3 day/night that combines tritium with a green fiber-

optic rod. It is set in a dovetail. The rear sight has two tritium lamps and a slightly serrated face. It's adjustable for elevation and windage, although the amount of windage adjustment is limited by the way the sight base is situated in the polymer slide cover.

While it would be easy to assume this cover can be removed to reveal a red-dot cut, that's not the case. The gun is not currently red-dot ready, and the cover should not be removed. KelTec engineers told me specifically that the cover's right-rear screw shouldn't be touched. It is the striker safety screw, and removing it voids the warranty.

Controls are simple. There's a grip safety as well as internal striker and magazine safeties. The slide-lock lever sits nearly flush against the frame and is lightly serrated. The reversible magazine release is triangular in shape, and

it doesn't protrude much from the grip. You'll find a loaded-chamber indicator at the top rear of the barrel hood that rises when there's a round in the gun. There's also a window cutout in the right side that allows you to assess the chamber's condition.

The trigger has about an eighth-inch of take-up followed by a longish 3/8-inch pull for a full half-inch of travel. Pull weight averaged three pounds, 12 ounces.

The polymer frame features a single-slot accessory rail out front. The grip sides sport what KelTec calls its gator grip pattern—six rows of textured →



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← blocks—while the frontstrap and slightly curved backstrap are deeply grooved.

The P15 ships with an add-on backstrap. It's of a softer, more pliable polymer than the frame material, and it both provides more girth and, as KelTec indicates, also provides a bit of cushion. Because adding this backstrap would prevent deactivation of the grip safety, KelTec furnishes a grip-safety extension that screws into the back of that safety.

Now, about those safeties. The P15 comes from the factory with both grip and magazine safeties activated. However, if you field-strip the gun, at the rear of the chassis on the right side you'll see a three-position selector switch. The factory setting is on No. 1, grip and magazine safety operational. Turn the selector to position 2—always clockwise and never counterclockwise—and both safeties are deactivated, although the striker safety is still operational. Turn it one more position to No. 3, and the grip safety is activated but the magazine disconnect goes away, which is how I used it.

I tested the P15 at 25 yards with a variety of ammo. KelTec says all SAAMI spec ammo is good to go, so +P is okay but +P+ is not. KelTec further warns against the use of reloads and says to use only brass-case ammo.

The gun proved to be decently accurate from the bench and quite good on seven-yard X Drills, which alternate head and chest shots on two targets. Even with the flush-fit 12-round magazine I found the P15 to be quite controllable considering its light weight, and easy to hit with at speed.

There were no failures to feed or chamber, although smacking home both magazines always caused the slide to go forward on its own. I also experienced three instances where the trigger failed to reset to what I expected. There was no resistance through the pull—as if I'd failed to deactivate the grip safety—and the break didn't come



▲ The P15 has a grip safety, and the slide lock and mag release sit fairly flush. The adjustable rear sight has tritium dots and is paired with a day/night front. The slide cover is not for a red dot and shouldn't be removed.



▲ A safety selector allows shooters to customize the gun. Position 1, the factory setting, activates the grip and magazine safeties. Position 2 deactivates both, while 3 keeps the grip safety but disables the mag disconnect.



▲ An add-on backstrap and grip safety extension come with the gun. The grip sides feature KelTec's gator pattern, and the extended mag provides 15+1 capacity and a full grip.

ACCURACY RESULTS | KELTEC P15

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Black Hills Honey Badger	90	1,141	18	3.2
Hornady Critical Defense	115	1,128	8	2.8
Norma Safeguard JHP	115	1,064	11	3.0
Federal Punch	124	1,094	9	3.8

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a Ransom Multi Cal Steady Rest using iron sights. Velocities are averages of 15 shots recorded 10 feet from the muzzle with a ProChrono DLX. Abbreviation: JHP, jacketed hollowpoint

until nearly the end of the pull. This was disconcerting, but the gun did fire, and I couldn't re-create the condition.

While it occurred only a couple times over close to 300 rounds, if the gun were mine it would be something to keep an eye on and possibly send back for inspection.

Overall I give the P15 high marks. Its

size, weight and capacity make it an excellent choice for concealed carry. It handles well and offers decent accuracy and reliability—plus it's got great sights and the ability to customize the safety features. With those visible screws that secure the frame to the chassis it's not going to win any beauty contests, but it's a solid companion. 🔴



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TISAS PX-9 GEN 3 CARRY OR

IF YOU GREW UP IN THE ERA BEFORE THE internet, you might remember that once upon a time a polymer-frame pistol was a novelty. Today, however, there are so many polymer-frame 9mm autoloading pistols on the market, from a wide variety of manufacturers, that it's challenging for any gun to stand out in the field. Tisas is betting that its new PX-9 Gen 3 Carry OR semiauto pistol will win over shooters with its reliability, its affordable price and its long list of extras.

The PX-9 Gen 3 Carry OR (Optics Ready) is a double-stack striker-fired 9mm with a polymer frame, forged steel slide, and forged and machined 3.5-inch barrel. The barrel is button rifled, and two 15-round, flush fit P228-pattern metal magazines ship with the gun. The gun also comes with a molded case with locking tabs, interchangeable backstraps and side grip panels, a cleaning brush and rod, a mag loader and a trigger lock.

Oh, and Tisas has even thrown in

an inside-the-waistband holster as well—all for a suggested retail price of \$370, which means you should be able to find it closer to \$300. If you want a value-priced striker-fired 9mm that offers almost everything you need for a day at the range except ammo, the Tisas makes a compelling case as the best bang-for-your-buck striker-fired gun on the market.

The test gun has a black Tenifer slide, and front and rear slide serrations and angular slide cuts reminiscent of CZ's P-10/P-07 pistols. A beefy side-mounted extractor contributes to reliability, and the trigger features an integral safety. The sights are on the Glock pattern and include a black square notch rear and fiber-optic front dot, and the slide is cut for the Trijicon RMR footprint. There's a Picatinny rail on the dust cover for attaching optics.

Controls are streamlined but large enough to be functional. They consist of an oblong mag release and a slide stop and takedown lever, both of

TISAS USA PX-9 GEN 3 CARRY OR

TYPE: striker-fired semiauto

CALIBER: 9mm Luger

CAPACITY: 18 (tested), 15, 10

BARREL: 3.5 in., 1:10 twist

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 7/5.8/1.3 in. (w/mag well, 18-round mag)

WEIGHT: 25 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: Tenifer-finished steel slide, polymer frame w/interchangeable backstraps and side panels

TRIGGER: 3 lb., 12 oz. (measured)

SIGHTS: black notch rear, fiber-optic front; slide cut for Trijicon RMR footprint

PRICE: \$370

MANUFACTURER: Tisas USA, TisasUSA.com

which are located on the left side of the frame. I much prefer the rotating takedown lever to the Glock-style transverse takedown pin arrangement.

With a barrel length of 3.5 inches the PX-9 Gen 3 Carry OR has an overall length of seven inches. Height is five inches from the top of the sights to the

base of the grip, but with the flared magazine well and 18-round magazine overall height ended up being 5.75 inches. Width is 1.25 inches without the mag well in place and 1.5 inches with it installed.

The Tisas is a solidly built pistol with a well-deserved reputation for reliability. In more than 100 rounds of testing the only problem I had with the gun was that the slide failed to lock back on an empty magazines on multiple occasions.

The bore axis lies about 1.35 inches above the top of the trigger guard opening, which is 0.1 inch higher than many competing 9mm pistols, so the Tisas doesn't feel as svelte and low in the hand as some guns like Ruger's Max-9 or Rost Martin's RM1C. However, the Tisas has a grip and controls that are large enough to make it easy to manage and operate, feeling more like a full-size gun than a carry pistol.

With a flat-face trigger that breaks at under four pounds, the Tisas can produce exceptional groups for a pistol with a 3.5-inch barrel, especially when you mount the pistol, as I did, with a reflex sight such as the Trijicon RMR-HD. The best five-shot 25-yard group of the day measured 1.65 inches and came courtesy of Federal's HST defensive load, although most of the loads I tested managed at least one five-shot group under 2.5 inches at that range. Several were closer to two inches. The sights are rudimentary but they work well and are durable.

Overall the Tisas deserves high praise for its performance, and I think it's certainly one of the best values in polymer-frame 9mm pistols today. It's not as small and light as some competitors, but it's very reliable and offers better accuracy than you need from a carry gun. The included metal magazines boost value, and the good trigger and RMR-ready slide make this an even more appealing pistol for around \$300.



▲ The Tisas PX-9 Gen 3 Carry OR comes with a large, easy-to-access slide stop and a magazine release. Also shown is the takedown lever, which makes disassembly safe and simple.



▲ The Tisas features a flat-face trigger with a passive trigger safety. The wide trigger is easy to control and the break weight is lighter than competing guns.



▲ The Tisas slide is cut for the Trijicon RMR footprint, which includes sights like the RMR-HD, and adding a red dot improves accuracy potential.

ACCURACY RESULTS | TISAS PX-9 GEN 3 CARRY OR

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	115	1,091	9	2.5
Nosler ASP JHP	115	1,060	13	3.0
Fiocchi FMJ	115	1,071	22	3.3
Magtech FMJ	124	1,109	24	3.3
Federal HST JHP	147	951	7	2.2

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a fixed rest. Velocity figures are 10-shot averages recorded on a LabRadar at the muzzle. Abbreviations: FMJ, full metal jacket; JHP, jacketed hollowpoint

The addition of a polymer inside-the-waistband holster is a thoughtful addition, and it works fine, but I'd imagine that most people who carry this gun every day will opt for something with a bit more substance. CrossBreed, Comp-Tac and other

companies offer holsters specific to the PX-9 Gen Carry OR. Could Turkish imports reinvent the American pistol market as they did with shotguns? Time will tell, but this Tisas is poised to make a big splash in the crowded carry-gun market. 



ED BROWN PAIR OF ACES

THE 1911 HAS TURNED INTO A STAPLE FOR many shooters, and while the list is long for both production and custom models, when something really special comes along, you do stand up and take notice. Such is the case with the Pair of Aces from Ed Brown Products of Perry, Missouri.

Built of stainless steel, polished and carrying consecutive serial numbers, these heavily engraved guns are state-of-the-art “art” guns for those looking for something unique in their display case. The pair consists of a full-size Government model and a Commander Bobtail model.

Both are precisely fit by Brown’s skilled craftsmen and finished with full-coverage engraving. Master engraver James White did the honors on the hand-relief pattern. Executed in a classic floral pattern, the detail is outstanding and without fault. In fact, the coverage is so complete

that even the smaller areas around the magazine release, trigger guard, barrel bushing and the inside surface of the grip safety have this impressive design. Coverage extends to the flats of the slide lock and single-sided serrated thumb safety, and the magazine release and grip screws are treated to enhanced detailing.

While the slide and frame are the center attractions, the slide’s top rib is custom made by first being flattened, then serrated and relieved on each side to give the appearance of a raised rib. The rear cocking serrations are finished with square vertical cuts, and the rear of the slide is serrated at 50 lines per inch.

The owner will decide whether these guns ever get fired, but they’re certainly up to the task. The Government gun has an adjustable target-type rear sight paired with a gold bead up front. The Commander has

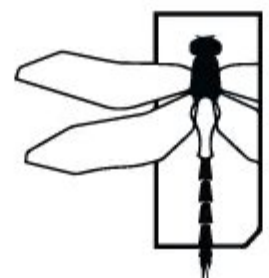
a front gold bead sight as well, while the rear is a low-profile fixed combat style. I measured the triggers by just pulling the hammers back—I wasn’t about to rack the slides on these special guns—and the Government model broke at four pounds. The Commander was a bit heavier, and both had just a tiny amount of slack before the sear broke.

The fronstraps and mainspring housings are checkered at 25 lpi, and the magazine well is beveled. The Commander also sports Ed Brown’s Bobtail cut. The final special touches on these guns are the handsome custom cocobolo grip panels. Half of the grip is checkered; the other half has a pair of aces engraved in them.

Special guns command special prices, and the Pair of Aces sells for \$16,995. So if you have some serious money burning a hole in your pocket, check them out at EdBrown.com. 



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